

FUTURE

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SCIENCE FICTION

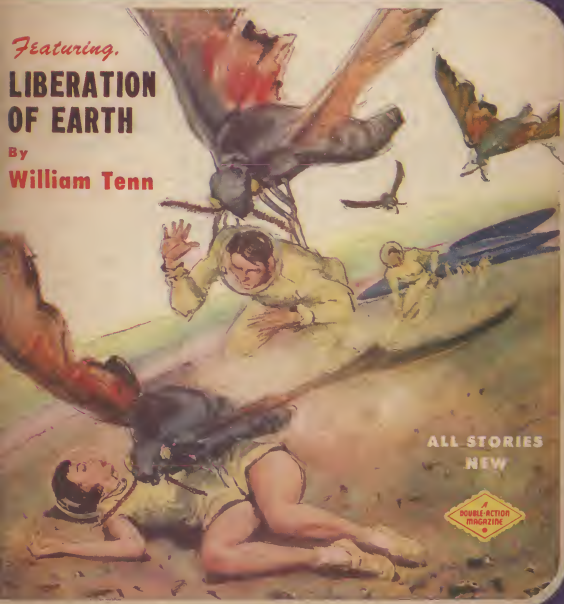
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Featuring.

LIBERATION OF EARTH

By

William Tenn



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City _____ Zone _____ State _____

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FUTURE

SCIENCE FICTION

May
1953

Volume
4
Number
1

Robert W. Lowndes

Editor

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Let us read this superb saga, and count our blessings . . .

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Cover by A. Leslie Ross, illustrating "Ecological Onslaught"
Interior Illustrations by Tom Beechem, Milton Luros, C. A. Murphy and Paul Orben

Next Issue on Sale May 1st

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J. E. SMITH has trained more men for
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"Got laid off my machine shop job which I believe was lost this year happened as I opened a full time Radio Shop. Business is picking up every week."—E. T. Dyer, Corvallis, Tenn.

GOOD JOB WITH STATION

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\$10 TO \$18 WEEK SPARE TIME

"Four months after enrolling for NRI courses, was able to receive \$10 a week. Now have \$18 a week spare time. Now have full time Radio and Television business."—William Weyde, Brooklyn, New York.

SWITCHED TO TV SERVICING

"I recently switched over from radio work and am now holding a position as service technician. I am still with RCA, enjoying my work more and more every day."—N. Ward, Ridgeland, N.J.

WANT YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Let me show you how you can be your own boss. Many NRI trained men start their own business with capital earned in spare time. Robert Dorman, New Haven, Conn., whose store is shown at left, says, "Am now tied in with two Television outlets and do warranty work for dealers. Often fell back to NRI textbooks for information."

1. EXTRA MONEY IN SPARE TIME

Many students make \$5, \$10 a week and more EXTRA fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time while learning. The day you enroll I start sending you SPECIAL BOOKLETS that show you how. Tester you build with kits I send helps you make extra money servicing sets, gives practical experience on circuits common to Radio and Television. All equipment is yours to keep.

2. GOOD PAY JOB

NRI Courses lead to these and many other jobs: Radio and TV service, P.A., Auto Radio, Lab, Factory, and Electronic Controls Technicians, Radio and TV Broadcasting, Police, Ship and Airways Operators and Technicians. Opportunities are increasing. The United States has over 105 million Radios—over 2,900 Broadcast Stations—more expansion is on the way.

3. BRIGHT FUTURE

Think of the opportunities in Television. Over 15,000,000 TV sets are now in use; 108 TV stations are operating and 1800 new TV stations have been authorized. . . many of them expected to be in operation in 1953. This means more jobs—good pay jobs with bright futures. More operators, installation service technicians will be needed. Now is the time to get ready for a successful future in TV! Find out what Radio and TV offer you.

You Learn Servicing or Communications by Practicing With Kits I Send

Keep your job while training at home. Hundreds I've trained are successful RADIO-TELEVISION Technicians. Most had no previous experience; many no more than grammar school education. Learn Radio-Television principles from illustrated lessons. You also get PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE. Pictorial charts are just a few of the pieces of equipment you build with kits of parts I send. You experiment with learn circuits common to Radio and Television.

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TELEVISION can be for You. Act Now! Send for my FREE DOUBLE OFFER. Coupon entitles you to actual Servicing Lessons show how you learn at home. You'll also receive my 64-page book, "How to Be a Success in Radio-Television." Send coupon in envelope or postal. J. E. SMITH, Pres., Dept. 3KT National Radio Institute, Washington 25, D.C. Our 35th Year.

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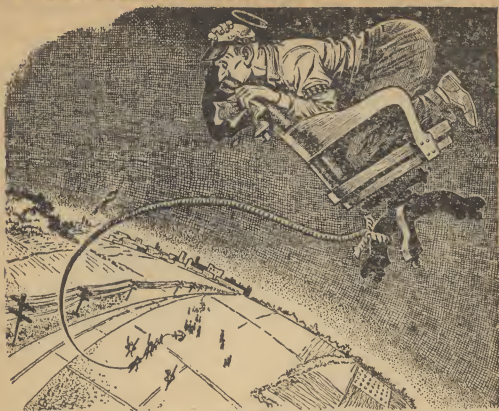
Television Is Today's Good Job Maker

TV now reaches from coast-to-coast. Qualify for a good job as a service technician or operator. My course includes many lessons on TV. You get practical experience . . . work on circuits common to both Radio and Television with my kits. Now is the time to get ready for success in Television!

This Is Just Some of
the Equipment My
Students Build. All
Parts Yours to Keep.

The ABC's of
SERVICING

How to Be a
Success in RADIO-
TELEVISION



Down To Earth

A Department of Letters and Comment

THE NEW era has just begun as this is being typed; you can read whatever you like into that phrase, and be reasonably sure of one thing: it won't be what you expect. A prophecy, even a reasonably-accurate one, is—among other things—a simplification; it tries to reduce matters to simple one-to-one relationships and extrapolate from there. Well, a number of matters can be simplified, thus; that's why some journalists achieve and maintain fairly good batting-averages on predictions over a course of years. When events are following a definite trend—whatever it may be—a keen observer can do rather well in telling you the general shape of things to come; but when a trend changes, then the guesses are likely as not to be way off.

If you're interested in such things, you might check over the predictions that were made between the election of 1932 and the beginning of the New Deal era; I haven't, but I'm willing to risk the wager that one or two came fairly close to the mark—and ten, twenty years hence, we may be able to check back on the guesses of observers that were published between November 1952 and January 20, 1953. Some of these may have been on, or near, the mark—but I doubt if you'll be able to spot them now.

Mr. Henry C. Roberts, of Nostradamus, Inc., offers us his visions as follows:

"Official Predictions for 1953 A.D. Atomic Year 9, Nostra. Year 666, 6666th Year, Julian Period.


[Turn To Page 8]

GEE what a build!
Didn't it take a long
time to get those muscles?

No SIR! - ATLAS
Makes Muscles Grow
Fast!

Will You Let Me PROVE Can Make YOU a New Man?

LET ME START SHOWING RESULTS FOR YOU



**5 inches
of new
Muscle**

"My arms increased
1 1-2", chest 2 1-2",
forearms 2 1-2", W. 5-
S. W. Va.



**What a
difference!**

"Have put
3 1-2" on
(chest normal)
and 2 1-2" ex-
panded." F. S.
N. Y.



**Here's what ATLAS
did for ME!**

John Jacobs
BEFORE

John Jacobs
AFTER



**For quick results
I recommend
CHARLES
ATLAS**

"Am sending snapshot
showing wonderful pro-
gress." W. G. N. J.

**GAINED
29
POUNDS**

"When I started,
weighed only
143. Now 170."
T. R. N. Y.

CHARLES ATLAS

Awarded the title
of "The World's
Most Perfectly De-
veloped Man" in
international con-
test—in competi-
tion with ALL men
who would consent
to appear against
him.

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I DON'T care how old or young
you are, or how ashamed of
your present physical condition
you may be. If you can simply
raise your arm and flex it I can
add **SOLID MUSCLE** to your biceps—
yes, on each arm—in dou-
ble-quick time! Only 15 minutes
a day—right in your own home—
at all the time I ask of you! And
there's no cost if I fail.

I can broaden your shoulders,
strengthen your back, develop
your whole muscular system **IN-
SIDE and OUTSIDE!** I can add
inches to your chest, give you a
viselike grip, make those legs of
yours lithe and powerful. I can
shoot new strength into your old
backbone, exercise those inner or-
gans, help you cram your body
so full of pep, vigor and red-
blooded vitality that you won't
feel there's even "standing room"
left for weakness and that lazy
feeling! Before I get through with
you I'll have your whole frame
"measured" to a nice, new beau-
tiful suit of muscle.

WHAT'S MY SECRET?

"**DYNAMIC TENSION!**" That's
the ticket! The identical natural
method that I myself developed
to change my body from the
scrawny skinny chested weakling I
was at 17 to my present super-
man physique! Thousands of other
fellows are becoming marvelous
physical specimens—any way. I
give you no gadgets or contrap-

tions to fool with. When you have
learned to develop your Strength
through "Dynamic Tension" you
can laugh at artificial muscle-
makers. You simply utilize the
DORMANT muscle-power in your
own God-given body—watch it in-
crease double-quick into real solid
LIVE MUSCLE.

My method—"Dynamic
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trick for you. No theory—
so easy! Spend only 15
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home. From the very start
you'll be using my method
of "Dynamic Tension" al-
most unconsciously every
minute of the day—walk-
ing, bending over, etc.—to
**BUILD MUSCLE and VIT-
ALITY.**

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Send **NOW** for my famous
book "Developing Health and
Strength." 32 pages packed from
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what "Dynamic Tension" can do,
answers vital questions. Free by
post it shows what I can do for
YOU.

This book is a real prize for
any fellow who wants a better
build. Yet I'll send you a copy ab-
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point in your whole life! So don't
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health questions, and valuable advice to
every man who wants a better build. I
understand this book is mine to keep,
and sending for it does not obligate me
in any way.

Name **AKA**
(Please print or write plainly)

Address

City Zone No.
(if any) State

"1. The year 1953 A.D. will go down in history as one of the most decisive and portentous turns in the record of man in his struggle for universal peace and eventual freedom from international warfare. The red planet *Mars* dominates the scene...the whole world will be an armed camp; and Eastern concentration headed by a man of steel (Stalin) which translated means steel...will be opposed by the nations of the West whose ruler will be a man of iron (Eisen or Eisenhower.) Iron and steel will be valued more than gold.

"2. The Korean situation will become of secondary consideration about the month of May...when unprecedented disturbances of a cosmic magnitude take place on the 48th degree, this is to be followed in October by a great revolution in which the Church shall suffer greater persecution than it ever had before. Open warfare will break out with the Arab league declaring a holy war and aligning themselves with the Russian orbit. The West Coast of the U.S. will be invaded and Oregon will be occupied by the Enemy.

"3. As foreseen by Nostradamus, in his 'Complete Prophecies of Nostradamus' first written in 1555 and now again available in a new edition, interpreted and edited by Henry C. Roberts, noted rare book collector and foremost world authority on this subject...and also according to the Prophecy embodied in the Great Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt. The first phase of Armageddon will begin no later than August 20th, 1953 and will last until 1999, after which will be a Golden age of Universal peace."

"4. 1953 will be the 450th anniversary of Nostradamus' birth, climaxed on the 14th, Dec. by a dinner given at the Waldorf-Astoria by the 'Nostradamians', Cary Wilson MGM producer of the forthcoming Nostradamus pictures to be released this year will be the guest of honor and Mr. Henry C. Roberts, President of Nostradamus, Inc., is in charge of arrange-

ments. Henry C. Roberts. Transcribed Dec. 15th, 1952."

That's a true copy, except for my correction of a mis-spelling of Stalin. I don't know whether any of the quatrains predict Mr. Roberts.

I can't top any of these with predictions of my own; I can't find anything to suggest whether the science-fiction boom will continue during 1953; whether it has already passed its peak and is now about to level off, or decline (let's hope not!), or whatever. In any event, this issue of *Future* should offer its own testimony to the effect that as long as both the magazines and I are around, we'll continue to keep at our job of bringing you the best we can.

LOOKING over the authors this time, we find Jack Vance, whose first appearance was with a novelet, "The World-Thinker," in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Summer 1945, and whose novel, "The Dying Earth" appeared in pocketbook form a couple of years back. For my money, his novelet in this issue is a good argument for the cover-story policy we've been following.

William Tenn, known by day as Philip Klass, is one of those persons who would have been burned at the stake by various inquisitors back in the Middle Ages; and why he hasn't been banned in Boston is something for a committee to investigate, no doubt. He first came to light in 1946, in the May issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*, with a tale entitled, "Alexander the Bait"; several of his stories have been anthologized—notably "Child's Play" and "The House Dutiful"—and he's now in the driver's seat of some anthologies himself.

Alfred Machado, Jr., writes us that "Tenth-Level Enigma" will be his first fiction appearance. "However," he says, "I sold an article some months ago. It is typical of the science-fiction
[Turn To Page 82]

This new manual shows you how to get HIGH SPEED & EXTRA POWER EASY with any car



0 to 60 miles in 12 seconds
Increase top speed of your car up to 30 miles
Secrets of Indianapolis Speedway revealed!



BEFORE

and all firms, special
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You have heard of drivers getting 30, 40, 50 miles on a single gallon of gas... you've been misled to see "fin can airplanes" beat you at the light every time... leave you in the dust on the highway! Now you can give your car greater pep, add 30 miles per hour to its top speed, surge ahead from 10 to 60 M.P.H. in 12 seconds! All you can save hundreds of dollars actually, burn water with extend car life by simple, easy tricks, quickly recondition cylinder walls without removing the motor! It seems incredible—but it's true! Many of these methods have been tested by huge industrial laboratories, government bureaus and used by famous Indianapolis



AFTER

booth "High Speed

& Extra Power"—but off the press!

Easy Pictures Show you how!



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Bernisty drew a blazing line in front of the Kay men.

Novelet Of
Worlds To Come

ECOLOGICAL ONSLAUGHT

The Kay system had no use for this world, but was determined that the men of the Blue Star should not develop it.

by Jack Vance

(illustrated by Paul Orban)



BOARD the exploration-cruiser *Blauelm* an ugly variety of psycho-neural ailments was developing. There was no profit in extending the expedition, already in space three months overlong; Explorator Bernisty ordered a return to Blue Star.

But there was no rise of spirits, no lift of morale; the damage had been done. Reacting from hypertension, the keen-tuned technicians fell into glum apathy, and sat staring like andromorphs. They ate little, they spoke less. Bernisty attempted various ruses; competition, subtle musics, pungent food, but without effect.

Bernisty went further; at his orders the play-women locked themselves in their quarters, and sang erotic chants into the ship's address-system. These protean measures failing, Bernisty had a dilemma on his hands. At stake was the identity of his team, so craftily put together—such a meteorologist to work with such a chemist; such a botanist for such a virus analyst. To return to Blue Star thus demoralized—Bernisty shook his craggy head. There would be no further ventures in *Blauelm*.

"Then let's stay out longer," suggested Berel, his own favorite among the play-women.

Bernisty shook his head, thinking that Berel's usual intelligence had failed her. "We'd make bad matters worse."

"Then what will you do?"

Bernisty admitted he had no idea, and went away to think. Later in the day, he decided on a course of immense consequence; he swerved aside to make a survey of the Kay System. If anything would rouse the spirits of his men, this was it.

There was danger to the detour, but none of great note; spice to the venture came from the fascination of the alien, the oddness of the Kay cities with their taboo against regular form, the bizarre Kay social system.

The star Kay glowed and waxed, and Bernisty saw that his scheme was succeeding. There was once more talk, animation, argument along the gray steel corridors.

The *Blauelm* slid above the Kay ecliptic; the various worlds fell astern, passing so close that the minute movement, the throb of the cities, the dynamic pulse of the workshops were plain in the viewplates. Kith and Kelmet—these two warted over with domes—Karnfray, Koblenz, Kavanaf, then the central sun-star Kay; then Kool, too hot for life; then Kerrykirk, the capitol world; then Kobald and Kinsle, the ammonia giants frozen and dead—and the Kay System was astern.

Now Bernisty waited on tenterhooks; would there be a relapse toward inanition, or would the intellectual impetus suffice for the remainder of the voyage? Blue Star lay ahead, another week's journey. Between lay a yellow star of no particular note.... It was while passing the yellow star that the consequences of Bernisty's ruse revealed themselves.

"Planet!" sang out the cartographer.

THIS WAS a cry to arouse no excitement; during the last eight months it had sounded many times

through the *Blauelm*. Always the planet had proved so hot as to melt iron; or so cold as to freeze gas; or so poisonous as to corrode skin; or so empty of air as to suck out a man's lungs. The call was no longer a stimulus.

"Atmosphere!" cried the cartographer. The meteorologist looked up in interest. "Mean temperature—twenty-four degrees!"

Bernisty came to look, and measured the gravity himself. "One and one-tenth normal..." He motioned to the navigator, who needed no more to compute for a landing.

Bernisty stood watching the disk of the planet in the viewplate. "There must be something wrong with it. Either the Kay or ourselves must have checked a hundred times; it's directly between us."

"No record of the planet, Bernisty," reported the librarian, burrowing eagerly among his tapes and pivots. "No record of exploration; no record of anything."

"Surely it's known the star exists?" demanded Bernisty with a hint of sarcasm.

"Oh, indeed—we call it Maraplexa, the Kay call it Melliflo. But there is no mention of either system exploring or developing."

"Atmosphere," called the meteorologist, "methane, carbon dioxide, ammonia, water vapor. Unbreathable, but Type 6-D—potential."

"No chlorophyll, haemaphyll, blusk, or petradine absorption," muttered the botanist, an eye to the spectrograph. "In short—no native vegetation."

"Let me understand all this," said Bernisty. "Temperature, gravity, pressure okay?"

"Okay."

"No corrosive gas?"

"None."

"No native life?"

"No sign."

"And no record of exploration, claim or development?"

"None."

"Then," said Bernisty triumphantly,



excitedly, and Bernisty held up his hand for peace.

"We shall see, we shall see."

Presently, Bufco—the radioman—brought three messages. The first, from Blue Star Central, conveyed congratulations; the second, from the Archive Station, corroborated the discovery; the third, from Kerrykirk, was clearly a hasty improvisation. It declared that the Kay System had long regarded Maraplexa as neutral, a no-man's-land between the two Systems; that a Blue Star development would be unfavorably received.

Bernisty chuckled at each of the three messages, most of all at the last. "The ears of their explorators are singing; they need new lands even more desperately than we do, what with their fecund breeding."

"Like farrowing pigs, rather than true men," sniffed Berel.

"They're true men if legend can be believed. We're said to be all stock of the same planet—all from the same lone world."

"The legend is pretty, but—where is this world—this old Earth of the fable?"

Bernisty shrugged. "I hold no brief for the myth; and now—here is our world below us."

"What will you name it?"

Bernisty considered. "In due course we'll find a name. Perhaps 'New Earth', to honor our primeval home."

THE UNSOPHISTICATED eye might have found New Earth harsh, bleak, savage. The windy atmosphere roared across plains and mountains; sunlight glared on deserts and seas of white alkali. Bernisty, however, saw the world as a diamond in the rough—the classic example of a world right for modification. The radiation was right; the gravity was right; the atmosphere held no halogens or corrosive fractions; the soil was free of alien life, and alien proteins, which poisoned even more effectively than the halogens.

Sauntering out on the windy surface,

"we're moving in." To the radioman: "Issue notice of intent. Broadcast to all quarters, the Archive Station. From this hour, Maraplexa is a Blue Star development!"

The *Blauchm* slowed, and swung down to land. Bernisty sat watching with Berel the play-girl.

"Why—why—why! Blandwick the navigator argued with the cartographer. "Why have not the Kay started development?"

"The same reason, evidently, that we haven't; we look too far afield."

"We comb the fringes of the galaxy," said Berel with a sly side-glance at Bernisty. "We sift the globular clusters."

"And here," said Bernisty, ruefully, "a near-neighbor to our own star—a world that merely needs an atmosphere modification—a world we can mold into a garden!"

"But will the Kay allow?" Blandwick put forth.

"What may they do?"

"This will come hard to them."

"So much the worse for the Kay!"

"They will claim a prior right."

"There are no records to demonstrate."

"And then—"

Bernisty interrupted. "Blandwick, go croak your calamity to the play-girls. With the men at work, they will be bored and so will listen to your woe."

"I know the Kay," maintained Blandwick. "They will never submit to what they will consider a humiliation—a stride ahead by Blue Star."

"They have no choice; they must submit," declared Berel, with the laughing recklessness that originally had called her to Bernisty's eye.

"You are wrong," cried Blandwick

he discussed all this with Berel. "Of such ground are gardens built," indicating a plain of loess which spread away from the base of the ship. "And of such hills—" he pointed to the range of hills behind "—do rivers come."

"When aerial water exists to form rain," remarked Berel.

"A detail, a detail; could we call ourselves ecologists and be deterred by so small a matter?"

"I am a play-girl, no ecologist—"

"Except in the largest possible sense."

"—I can not consider a thousand billion tons of water a detail."

Bernisty laughed. "We go by easy stages. First the carbon dioxide is sucked down and reduced; for this reason we sowed standard 6-D Basic vetch along the loess today."

"But how will it breathe? Don't plants need oxygen?"

"Look."

From the *Blauelm*, a cloud of brown-green smoke erupted, rose in a greasy plume to be carried off downwind. "Spores of symbiotic lichens: Type Z forms oxygen-pods on the vetch. Type RS is non-photosynthetic—it combines methane with oxygen to make water, which the vetch uses for its growth. The three plants are the standard primary unit for worlds like this one."

Berel looked around the dusty horizon. "I suppose it will develop as you predict—and I will never cease to marvel."

"In three weeks, the plain will be green; in six weeks, the sporing and seeding will be in full swing; in six months, the entire planet will be forty feet deep in vegetation, and in a year, we'll start establishing the ultimate ecology of the planet."

"If the Kay allow."

"The Kay can not prevent; the planet is ours."

Berel inspected the burly shoulders, the hard profile. "You speak with masculine positivity, where everything depends and stipulates from the traditions of the Archive Station. I have no

such certainty; my universe is more dubious."

"You are intuitive, I am rational."

"Reason," mused Berel, "tells you the Kay will abide by the Archive laws; my intuition tells me they will not."

"But what can they do? Attack us? Drive us off?"

"Who knows?"

Bernisty snorted. "They'll never dare."

"How long do we wait here?"

"Only to verify the germination of the vetch, then back to Blue Star."

"And then?"

"And then—we return to develop the full scale ecology."

2



tip.

Bernisty critically examined the stem. Fastened like tiny galls were sacs in two colors—pale green and white. He pointed these out to Berel. "The green pods store oxygen, the white collect water."

"So," said Berel, "already New Earth begins to shift its atmosphere."

"Before your life runs out, you will see Blue Star cities along that plain."

"Somehow, my Bernisty, I doubt that."

The head-set sounded. "X. Bernisty; Radioman Bufco here. Three ships circling the planet; they refuse to acknowledge signals."

Bernisty cast the sprig of vetch to the ground. "That'll be the Kay."

Berel looked after him. "Where are the Blue Star cities now?"

IN THE thirteenth day, Bartenbrock, the botanist, trudged back from a day on the windy loess to announce the first shoots of vegetation. He showed samples to Bernisty—small pale sprigs with varnished leaves at the

Bernisty hastening away made no answer. Berel came after, followed to the control room of the *Blauelm*, where Bernisty tuned the viewplate. "Where are they?" she asked.

"They're around the planet just now—scouting."

"What kind of ships are they?"

"Patrol-attack vessels. Kay design. Here they come now."

Three dark shapes showed on the screen. Bernisty snapped to Bufco, "Send out the Universal Greeting Code."

"Yes, Bernisty."

Bernisty watched, while Bufco spoke in the archaic Universal language.

The ships paused, swerved, settled.

"It looks," said Berel softly, "as if they are landing."

"Yes."

"They are armed; they can destroy us."

"They can—but they'll never dare."

"I don't think you quite understand the Kay psyche."

"Do you?" snapped Bernisty.

She nodded. "Before I entered my girl-hood, I studied; now that I near its end, I plan to continue."

"You are more productive as a girl; while you study and cram your pretty head, I must find a new companion for my cruising."

She nodded at the settling black ships. "If there is to be more cruising for any of us."

BUFECO LEANED over his instrument, as a voice spoke from the mesh. Bernisty listened to syllables he could not understand, though the peremptory tones told their own story.

"What's he say?"

"He demands that we vacate this planet; he says it is claimed by the Kay."

"Tell him to vacate himself; tell him he's crazy. . . . No, better, tell him to communicate with Archive Station."

Bufco spoke in the archaic tongue; the response crackled forth.

"He is landing. He sounds pretty firm."

"Let him land; let him be firm! Our claim is guaranteed by the Archive Station!" But Bernisty nevertheless pulled on his head-dome, and went outside to watch the Kay ships settle upon the loess, and he winced at the energy singeing the tender young vetch he had planted.

There was movement at his back; it was Berel. "What do you do here?" he asked brusquely. "This is no place for play-girls."

"I come now as a student."

Bernisty laughed shortly; the concept of Berel as a serious worker seemed somehow ridiculous.

"You laugh," said Berel. "Very well, let me talk to the Kay."

"You!"

"I know both Kay and Universal."

Bernisty glared, then shrugged. "You may interpret."

The ports of the black ship opened; eight Kay men came forward. This was the first time Bernisty had ever met one of the alien system face-to-face, and at first sight he found them fully as bizarre as he had expected. They were tall spare men, on the whole. They wore flowing black cloaks; the hair had been shorn smooth from their heads, and their scalps were decorated with heavy layers of scarlet and black enamel.

"No doubt," whispered Berel, "they find us just as unique."

Bernisty made no answer, having never before considered himself unique.

The eight men halted, twenty feet distant, stared at Bernisty with curious, cold, unfriendly eyes. Bernisty noted that all were armed.

Berel spoke; the dark eyes swung to her in surprise. The foremost responded.

"What's he say?" demanded Bernisty.

Berel grinned. "They want to know if I, a woman, lead the expedition."

Bernisty quivered and flushed. "You tell them that I, Explorer Bernisty, am in full command."

Berel spoke, at rather greater length than seemed necessary to convey his message. The Kay answered.

"Well?"

"He says we'll have to go; that he bears authorization from Kerrykirk to clear the planet, by force if necessary."

Bernisty sized up the man. "Get his name," he said, to win a moment or two.

Berel spoke, received a cool reply.

"He's some kind of a commodore," she told Bernisty. "I can't quite get it clear. His name is Kallish or Kallis..."

"Well, ask Kallish if he's planning to start a war. Ask him which side the Archive Station will stand behind."

Berel translated. Kallish responded at length.

Berel told Bernisty, "He maintains that we are on Kay ground, that Kay colonizers explored this world, but never recorded the exploration. He claims that if war comes it is our responsibility."

"He wants to bluff us," muttered Bernisty from the corner of his mouth. "Well, two can play that game." He drew his needle-beam, scratched a smoking line in the dust two paces in front of Kallish.

KALLISH reacted sharply, jerking his hand to his own weapon; the others in his party did likewise.

Bernisty said from the side of his mouth, "Tell 'em to leave—take off back to Kerrykirk, if they don't want the beam along their legs..."

Berel translated, trying to keep the nervousness out of her voice. For answer, Kallish snapped on his own beam, burned a flaring orange mark in front of Bernisty.

Berel shakily translated his message. "He says for us to leave."

Bernisty slowly burned another line into the dust, closer to the black-shod feet. "He's asking for it."

Berel said in a worried voice, "Bernisty, you underestimate the Kay! They're rock-hard—stubborn—"

"And they underestimate Bernisty!"

There was quick staccato talk among the Kay; then Kallish, moving



with a jerky flamboyance, snapped down another flickering trench almost at Bernisty's toes.

Bernisty swayed a trifle, then setting his teeth, leaned forward.

"This is a dangerous game," cried Berel.

Bernisty aimed, spattered hot dust over Kallish's sandals. Kallish stepped back; the Kay behind him roared. Kallish, his face a saturnine grinning mask, slowly started burning a line that would cut across Bernisty's ankles. Bernisty could move back—or Kallish could curve aside his beam...

Berel sighed. The beam spat straight, Bernisty stood rock-still. The beam cut the ground, cut over Bernisty's feet, cut on.

Bernisty stood still grinning. He raised his needle-beam.

Kallish turned on his heel, strode away, the black cape flapping in the ammoniacal wind.

Bernisty stood watching; a taut shape, frozen between triumph, pain and fury. Berel waited, not daring to speak. A minute passed. The Kay ships rose up from the dusty soil of New Earth, and the energy burnt down more shoots of the tender young vetch...

Berel turned to Bernisty: he was stumbling; his face was drawn and ghastly. She caught him under the armpits. From the *Blauelm* came Blandwick and a medic. They placed

Bernisty in a litter, and conveyed him to the sick-ward.

As the medic cut cloth and leather away from the charred bones, Bernisty croaked to Berel, "I won today. They're not done... But today—I won!"

"It cost you your feet!"

"I can grow new feet—" Bernisty gasped and sweat as the medic touched a live nerve "—I can't grow a new plant..."

CONTRARY to Bernisty's expectations, the Kay made no further landing on New Earth. Indeed, the days passed with deceptive calm. The sun rose, glared a while over the other, yellow and gray landscape, sank in a western puddle of greens and reds. The winds slowed; a peculiar calm fell over the loess plain. The medic, by judicious hormones, grafts and calcium transplants, set Bernisty's feet to growing again. Temporarily he hobbled around in special shoes, staying close to the *Blauelm*.

Six days after the Kay had come and gone, the *Beaudry* arrived from Blue Star. It brought a complete ecological laboratory, with stocks of seeds, spores, eggs, sperm; spawn, bulbs, grafts; frozen fingerlings, copepods, experimental cells and embryos; grubs, larva, pupae; amoeba, bacteria, viruses; as well as nutritive cultures and solutions. There were also tools for manipulating or mutating established species; even a supply of raw nuclein, unpatterned tissue, clear protoplasm from which simple forms of life could be designed and constructed. It was now Bernisty's option either to return to Blue Star with the *Blauelm*, or remain to direct the development of New Earth. Without conscious thought he made his choice; he elected to stay. Almost two-thirds his technical crew made the same choice. And the day after the arrival of the *Beaudry*, the *Blauelm* took off for Blue Star.

This day was notable in several respects. It signaled the complete

changeover in Bernisty's life; from Explorer, pure and simple, to the more highly-specialized Master Ecologist, with the corresponding rise in prestige. It was on this day that New Earth took on the semblance of a habitable world, rather than a barren mass of rock and gas to be molded. The vetch over the loess plain had grown to a mottled green-brown sea, beaded and wadded with lichen pods. Already it was coming to its first seed. The lichens had already spored three or four times. There was yet no detectable change in the New Earth atmosphere; it was still CO₂, methane, ammonia, with traces of water vapor and inert gases, but the effect of the vetch was geometrically progressive, and as yet the total amount of vegetation was small compared to what it would be.

THE THIRD event of importance upon this day was the appearance of Kathryn.

She came down in a small space-boat, and landed with a roughness that indicated either lack of skill or great physical weakness. Bernisty watched the boat's arrival from the dorsal promenade of the *Beaudry*, with Berel standing at his elbow.

"A Kay boat," said Berel huskily.

Bernisty looked at her in quick surprise. "Why do you say that? It might be a boat from Alvan or Canopus—or the Graemer System, or a Dannie vessel from Copenhagen."

"No. It is Kay."

"How do you know?"

Out of the boat stumbled the form of a young woman. Even at this distance it could be seen she was very beautiful—something in the confidence of movement, the easy grace.... She wore a head-dome, but little else. Bernisty felt Berel stiffening. Jealousy? She felt none when he amused himself with other play-girls; did she sense here a deeper threat?

Berel said in a throaty voice, "She's a spy—a Kay spy. Send her away!"

Bernisty was pulling on his own

dome; a few minutes later, he walked across the dusty plain to meet the young woman, who was pushing her way slowly against the wind.

Bernisty paused, sized her up. She was slight, more delicate in build than most of the Blue Star women; she had a thick cap of black elf-locks; pale skin with the luminous look of old vellum; wide dark eyes.

Bernisty felt a peculiar lump rising in his throat; a feeling of awe and protectiveness such as Berel nor any other woman had ever aroused. Berel was behind him. Berel was antagonistic; both Bernisty and the strange woman felt it.

Berel said, "She's a spy—clearly! Send her away!"

Bernisty said, "Ask her what she wants."

The woman said, "I speak your Blue Star language, Bernisty; you can ask me yourself."

"Very well. Who are you? What do you do here?"

"My name is Kathryn—"

"She is a Kay!" said Berel.

"—I am a criminal. I escaped my punishment, and fled in this direction."

"Come," said Bernisty. "I would examine you more closely."

In the *Beaudry* wardroom, crowded with interested watchers, she told her story. She claimed to be the daughter of a Kirkassian freeholder—

"What is that?" asked Berel in a skeptical voice.

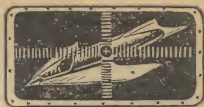
Kathryn responded mildly. "A few of the Kirkassians still keep their strongholds in the Keviot Mountains—a tribe descended from ancient brigands."

"So you are the daughter of a brigand?"

"I am more; I am a criminal in my own right," replied Kathryn mildly.

Bernisty could contain his curiosity no more. "What did you do, girl; what did you do?"

"I committed the act of—" here she used a Kay word which Bernisty was unable to understand. Berel's knitted



brows indicated that she likewise was puzzled. "After that," went on Kathryn, "I upset a brazier of incense on the head of a priest. Had I felt remorse, I would have remained to be punished; since I did not I fled here in the space-boat."

"Incredible!" said Berel in disgust.

Bernisty sat watching in amusement. "Apparently, girl, you are believed to be a Kay spy. What do you say to that?"

"If I were or if I were not—in either case I would deny it."

"You deny it then?"

Kathryn's face creased; she broke out into a laugh of sheer delight. "No. I admit it. I am a Kay spy."

"I knew it, I knew it—"

"Hush, woman," said Bernisty. He turned to Kathryn, his brow creased in puzzlement. "You admit you are a spy?"

"Do you believe me?"

"By the Bulls of Bashan—I hardly know what I believe!"

"She's a clever trickster—cunning!" stormed Berel. "She's pulling her artful silk around your eyes."

"Quiet!" roared Bernisty. "Give me some credit for normal perceptiveness!" He turned to Kathryn. "Only a madwoman would admit to being a spy."

"Perhaps I am a madwoman," she said with grave simplicity.

Bernisty threw up his hands. "Very well, what is the difference? There are no secrets here in the first place. If you wish to spy, do so—as overtly or as stealthily as you please, whichever suits you. If you merely seek refuge, that is yours too, for you are on Blue Star soil."

"My thanks to you, Bernisty."

3



BERNISTY flew out with Broderick, the cartographer, mapping, photographing, exploring and generally inspecting New Earth. The landscape was everywhere similar—a bleak scarred surface like the inside

of a burned out kiln. Everywhere loess plains of wind-spread dust abutted harsh crags.

Broderick nudged Bernisty. "Observe."

Bernisty, following the gesture, saw three faintly-marked but unmistakable squares on the desert below—vast areas of crumbled stone, strewn over by wind-driven sand.

"Those are either the most gigantic crystals the universe has ever known," said Bernisty, "or—we are not the first intelligent race to set foot on this planet."

"Shall we land?"

Bernisty surveyed the squares through his telescope. "There is little to see.... Leave it for the archaeologists; I'll call some out from Blue Star."

Retruning toward the *Beaudry*, Bernisty suddenly called, "Stop!"

They set down the survey-boat; Bernisty alighted, and with vast satisfaction inspected a patch of green-brown vegetation: Basic 6-D vetch, podded over with the symbiotic lichens which feed it oxygen and water.

"Another six weeks," said Bernisty, "the world will froth with this stuff."

Broderick peered closely at a leaf. "What is that red blotch?"

"Red blotch?" Bernisty peered, frowned. "It looks like a rust, a fungus."

"Is that good?"

"No—of course not! It's—bad!... I can't quite understand it. This planet was sterile when we arrived."

"Spores drop in from space," suggested Broderick.

Bernisty nodded. "And space-boats likewise. Come, let's get back to the *Beaudry*. You have the position of this spot?"

"To the centimeter."

"Never mind. I'll kill this colony."

And Bernisty seared the ground clean of the patch of vetch he had been so proud of. They returned to the *Beaudry* in silence, flying in over the plain which now grew thick with mottled foliage. Alighting from the boat, Bernisty ran not to the *Beaudry* but to the nearest shrub, and inspected the leaves. "None here... None here—nor here..."

"Bernisty!"

Bernisty looked around. Baron the botanist approached, his face stern. Bernisty's heart sank. "Yes?"

"There has been inexcusable negligence."

"Rust?"

"Rust. It's destroying the vetch."

Bernisty swung on his heel. "You've got a sample?"

"We're already working out a counter-agent in the lab."

"Good..."

But the rust was a hardy growth; finding an agency to destroy the rust and still leave the vetch and the lichens unharmed proved a task of enormous difficulty. Sample after sample failed to satisfy the conditions and were destroyed in the furnace. Meanwhile, the color of the vetch changed from brown-green to red-green to iodine-color; and the proud growth began to slump and rot.

Bernisty walked sleeplessly, exhorting, cursing his technicians. "You call yourselves ecologists? A simple affair of separating a rust from the vetch—you fail, you flounder! Here—give me that culture!" And Bernisty seized the culture-disk from Baron, himself red-eyed and irritable.

The desired agent was at last found in a culture of slime-molds; and another two days passed before the pure

strain was isolated and set out in a culture. Now the vetch was rotting, and the lichens lay scattered like autumn leaves.

Aboard the *Beaudry* there was feverish activity. Cauldrons full of culture crowded the laboratory, the corridors; trays of spores dried in the saloon, in the engine-room, in the library.

Here Bernisty once more became aware of Kathryn, when he found her scraping dry spores into distribution boxes. He paused to watch her; he felt the shift of her attention from the task to himself, but he was too tired to speak. He merely nodded, turned and returned to the laboratory.

The slime-molds were broadcast, but clearly it was too late. "Very well," said Bernisty, "we broadcast another setting of seed—Basic 6-D vetch. This time we know our danger and we already have the means to protect ourselves."

THE NEW vetch grew; much of the old vetch revived. The slime-mold, when it found no more rust, perished—except for one or two mutant varieties which attacked the lichen. For a time, it appeared as if these sports would prove as dangerous as the rust; but the *Beaudry* catalogue listed a virus selectively attacking slime-molds; this was broadcast, and the molds disappeared.

Bernisty was yet disgruntled. At an assembly of the entire crew he said, "Instead of three agencies—the vetch and the two lichens—there is now extant six, counting the rust, the slime-mold, the virus. The more life—the harder to control. I emphasize most strongly the need for care and absolute antisepsis."

In spite of the precautions, rust appeared again—this time a black variety. But Bernisty was ready; inside of two days, he disseminated counter-agent. The rust disappeared; the vetch flourished. Everywhere, now, across the planet lay the brown-green carpet. In spots it rioted forty feet thick, climbing and wrestling, stalk against stalk, leaf lapping leaf. It climbed up the

granite crags; it hung festooned over precipices. And each day, countless tons of CO₂ became oxygen, methane became water and more CO₂.

Bernisty watched the atmospheric analyses closely; and one day the percentage of oxygen in the air rose from the 'imperceptible' to the 'minute trace' category. On this day, he ordered a general holiday and banquet. It was Blue Star formal custom for men and women to eat separately, the sight of open mouths being deemed as immodest as the act of elimination. The occasion however was one of high comradeship and festivity, and Bernisty, who was neither modest nor sensitive, ordered the custom ignored; so it was in an atmosphere of gay abandon that the banquet began.

As the banquet progressed, as the ichors and alcohols took effect, the hilarity and abandon became more pronounced. At Bernisty's side sat Berel, and though she had shared his couch during the feverish weeks previously she had felt that his attentions were completely impersonal; that she was no more than play-girl. When she noticed his eyes almost of themselves on Kathryn's wine-flushed face, she felt emotions rising inside her that almost brought tears to her eyes.

"This must not be," she muttered to herself. "In a few months I am play-girl no more; I am student. I mate whom I choose; I do not choose this bushy egotistical brute, this philandering Bernisty!"

In Bernisty's mind there were strange stirrings too. "Berel is pleasant and kind," he thought. "But Kathryn! The flair! The spirit!" And feeling her eyes on him he thrilled like a schoolboy.

BRODERICK the cartographer, his head spinning and fuzzy, at this moment seized Kathryn's shoulders and drew her back to kiss her. She pulled aside, cast a whimsical glance at Bernisty. It was enough. Bernisty was by her side; he lifted her, carried her back to his chair, still hobbling on his

burnt feet. Her perfume intoxicated him as much as the wine; he hardly noticed Berel's furious face.

This must not be, thought Berel desperately. And now inspiration came to her. "Bernisty! Bernisty!" She tugged at his arm.

Bernisty turned his head. "Yes?"

"The rusts—I know how they appeared on the vetch!"

"They drifted down as spores—from space."

"They drifted down in Kathryn's space-boat! She's not a spy—she's a saboteur!" Even in her fury Berel had to admire the limpid innocence of Kathryn's face. "She's a Kay agent—an enemy."

"Oh, bah," muttered Bernisty, sheepishly. "This is woman-talk."

"Woman-talk, is it?" screamed Berel. "What do you think is happening now, while you feast and fondle?—" she pointed a finger on which the metal foil flower blossom quivered—"that—that *becsom!*"

"Why—I don't understand you," said Bernisty, looking in puzzlement from girl to girl.

"While you sit lording it, the Kay spread blight and ruin!"

"Eh? What's this?" Bernisty continued to look from Berel to Kathryn, feeling suddenly clumsy and rather foolish. Kathryn moved on his lap. Her voice was easy, but now her body was stiff. "If you believe so, check on your radars and viewsopes."

Bernisty relaxed. "Oh—nonsense."

"No, no no!" shrilled Berel. "She tries to seduce your reason!"

Bernisty growled to Bufco, "Check the radar." Then he, too, rose to his feet. "I'll come with you."

"Surely you don't *believe*—" began Kathryn.

"I believe nothing till I see the radar tapes."

Bufco flung switches, focussed his viewer. A small pip of light appeared. "A ship!"

"Coming or going?"

"Right now it's going!"

"Where are the tapes?"

Bufco reeled out the records. Bernisty bent over them, his eyebrows bristling. "Humph."

Bufco looked at him questioningly.

"This is very strange."

"How so?"

"The ship had only just arrived—almost at once it turned aside, fled out, away from New Earth."

Bufco studied the tapes. "This occurred precisely four minutes and thirty seconds ago."

"Precisely when we left the saloon."

"Do you think—"

"I don't know what to think."

"It's almost as if they received a message—a warning..."

"But how? From where?" Bernisty hesitated. "The natural object of suspicion," he said slowly, "is Kathryn."

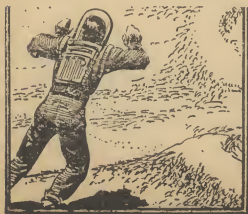
Bufco looked up with a curious glint in his eyes. "What will you do with her?"

"I didn't say she was guilty; I remarked that she was the logical object of suspicion..." He pushed the tape magazine back under the scanner. "Let's go see what's been done.... What new mischief..."

No mischief was apparent. The skies were clear and yellowish-green; the vetch grew well.

Bernisty returned inside the *Beau-dry*, gave certain instructions to Blandwick, who took off in the survey-boat and returned an hour later with a small silk bag held carefully. "I don't know what they are," said Blandwick.

"They're bound to be bad." Bernisty



took the small silk bag to the laboratory and watched while the two botanists, the two mycologists, the four entomologists studied the contents of the bag.

The entomologists identified the material. "These are eggs of some small insect—from the gene-count and diffractation-pattern one or another of the mites."

Bernisty nodded. He looked sourly at the waiting men. "Need I tell you what to do?"

"No."

BERNISTY returned to his private office and presently sent for Berel. He asked, without preliminary, "How did you know a Kay ship was in the sky?"

Berel stood staring defiantly down at him. "I did not know; I guessed."

Bernisty studied her for a moment. "Yes—you spoke of your intuitive abilities."

"This was not intuition," said Berel scornfully. "This was plain common-sense."

"I don't follow you."

"It's perfectly clear. A Kay woman-spy appears. The ecology went bad right away; red rust and black rust. You beat the rust, you celebrate; you're keyed to a sense of relief. What better time to start a new plague?"

Bernisty nodded slowly. "What better time, indeed..."

"Incidentally—what kind of plague is it going to be?"

"Plant-lice—mites. I think we can beat it before it gets started."

"Then what?"

"I don't know..."

"It looks as if the Kay can't scare us off, they mean to work us to death."

"That's what it looks like."

"Can they do it?"

"I don't see how we can stop them from trying. It's easy to breed pests; hard to kill them."

Banta, the head entomologist, came in with a glass tube. "Here's some of them—hatched."

"Already?"

"We hurried it up a little."

"Can they live in this atmosphere? There's not much oxygen—lots of ammonia."

"They thrive on it; it's what they're breathing now."

Bernisty ruefully inspected the bottle. "And that's our good vetch they're eating, too."

Berel looked over his shoulder. "What can we do about them?"

Banta looked properly dubious. "The natural enemies are certain parasites, viruses, dragonflies, and a kind of a small armored gnat that breeds very quickly; and which I think we'd do best to concentrate on. In fact we're already engaging in large-scale selective breeding, trying to find a strain to live in this atmosphere."

"Good work, Banta." Bernisty rose to his feet.

"Where are you going?" asked Berel.

"Out to check on the vetch."

"I'll come with you."

Out on the plain, Bernisty seemed intent not so much on the vetch as on the sky.

"What are you looking for?" Berel asked.

Bernisty pointed. "See that wisp up there?"

"A cloud?"

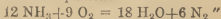
"Just a bit of frost—a few sprinkles of ice crystals... But it's a start! Our first rainstorm—that'll be an event!"

"Provided the methane and oxygen don't explode—and send us all to kingdom come!"

"Yes, yes," muttered Bernisty. "We'll have to set out some new methanophiles."

"And how will you get rid of all this ammonia?"

"There's a marsh-plant from Salsiberry that under proper conditions performs the equation:



"Rather a waste of time for it, I should say," remarked Berel. "What does it gain?"

"A freak, only a freak. What do we gain by laughing? Another freak."

"A pleasant uselessness."

Bernisty was examining the vetch. "There, here. Look. Under this leaf." He displayed the mites; slow yellow aphid-creatures.

"When will your gnats be ready?"

"Banta is letting half his stock free; maybe they'll feed faster on their own than in the laboratory."

"Does—does Kathryn know about the gnats?"

"You're still gunning for her, eh?"

"I think she's a spy."

Bernisty said mildly, "I can't think of a way that either one of you could have communicated with that Kay ship."

"Either one of us!"

"Someone warned him away. Kathryn is the logical suspect; but you knew he was there."

Berel swung on her heel, stalked back to the *Beaudry*.

4



THE GNATS were countering the mites, apparently; the population of both first increased, then dwindled. After which the vetch grew taller and stronger. There was now oxygen in the air, and the bota-

nists broadcast a dozen new species—broad-leaves, producers of oxygen; nitrogen-fixers, absorbing the ammonia; the methanophiles from the young methane-rich worlds, combining oxygen with methane, and growing in magnificent white towers like carved ivory.

Bernisty's feet were whole again, a size larger than his first ones and he was forced to discard his worn and comfortable boots for a new pair cut from stiff blue leather.

Kathryn was playfully helping him cram his feet into the hard vacancies. Casually, Bernisty said, "It's been

bothering me, Kathryn: tell me, how did you call to the Kay?"

She started, gave him an instant pitoeous wide-eyed stare, like a trapped rabbit, then she laughed. "The same way you do—with my mouth."

"When?"

"Oh, every day about this time."

"I'd be glad to watch you."

"Very well." She looked up at the window, spoke in the ringing Kay tongue.

"What did you say?" asked Bernisty politely.

"I said that the mites were a failure; that there was good morale here aboard the *Beaudry*; that you were a great leader, a wonderful man."

"But you recommended no further steps."

She smiled demurely. "I am no ecologist—neither constructive, nor destructive."

"Very well," said Bernisty, standing into his boots. "We shall see."

NEXT DAY the radar-tapes showed the presence of two ships; they had made fleeting visits—"long enough to dump their villainous cargo," so Bufco reported to Bernisty.

The cargo proved to be eggs of a ferocious blue wasp, which preyed on the gnats. The gnats perished; the mites prospered; the vetch began to wilt under the countless sucking tubes. To counter the wasp, Bernisty released a swarm of feathery blue flying-ribbons. The wasps bred inside a peculiar, small brown puff-ball fungus (the spores for which had been released with the wasp larva). The flying-ribbons ate these puff-balls. With no shelter for their larva, the wasps died; the gnats revived in numbers, gorging on mites till their thoraxes split.

The Kay assaulted on a grander scale. Three large ships passed by night, disgorging a witches-cauldron of reptiles, insects, arachnids, land-crabs, a dozen phyla without formal classification. The human resources of

the *Beaudry* were inadequate to the challenge; they began to fail, from insect stings; another botanist took a pulsing white-blue gangrene from the prick of a poisonous thorn.

New Earth was no longer a mild region of vetch, lichen, and dusty wind; New Earth was a fantastic jungle. Insects stalked each other through the leafy wildernesses; there were local specializations and improbable adaptations. There were spiders, and lizards the size of cats; scorpions which rang like bells when they walked; long-legged lobsters; poisonous butterflies; a species of giant moth, which, finding the environment congenial, grew ever more gigantic.

Within the *Beaudry* they was everywhere a sense of defeat. Bernisty walked limping along the promenade, the limp more of an unconscious attitude than a physical necessity. The problem was too complex for a single brain, he thought—or for a single team of human brains. The various life-forms on the planet, each evolving, mutating, expanding into vacant niches, selecting the range of their eventual destinies—they made a pattern too haphazard for an electronic computer, for a team of computers.

Blandwick, the meteorologist, came along the promenade with his daily atmospheric-report. Bernisty derived a certain melancholy pleasure to find that while there had been no great increase in oxygen and water-vapor, neither had there been any decrease. "In fact," said Blandwick, "there's a tremendous amount of water tied up in all those bugs and parasites."

Bernisty shook his head. "Nothing appreciable.... And they're eating away the vetch faster than we can kill 'em off. New varieties appear faster than we can find them."

Blandwick frowned. "The Kay are following no clear pattern."

"No, they're just dumping anything they hope might be destructive."

"Why don't we use the same technique? Instead of selective counter-ac-

tion, we turn loose our entire biological program. Shotgun tactics."

Bernisty limped on a few paces. "Well, why not? The total effect might be beneficial.... Certainly less destructive than what's going on out there now." He paused. "We deal in unpredictables of course—and this is contrary to my essential logic."

Blandwick sniffed. "None of our gains to date have been the predictable ones."

Bernisty grinned, after a momentary irritation, since Blandwick's remark was inaccurate; had Blandwick been driving home a truth, then there would have been cause for irritation.

"Very well, Blandwick," he said jovially. "We shoot the works. If it succeeds we'll name the first settlement Blandwick."

"Humph," said the pessimistic Blandwick, and Bernisty went to give the necessary orders.



NOW EVERY vat, tub, culture tank, incubator, tray and rack in the laboratory was full; as soon as the contents achieved even a measure of acclimatization to the still nitrogenous atmosphere, they were discharged: pods, plants, molds, bacteria, crawling things, insects, annelids, crustaceans, land ganoids, even a few elementary mammals—life-forms from well over three dozen different worlds. Where New Earth had previously been a battleground, now it was a madhouse.

One variety of palms achieved instant success; inside of two months they towered everywhere over the landscape. Between them hung veils of a peculiar air-floating web, subsisting on flying things. Under the branch-

es, the brambles, there was much killing; much breeding; much eating; growing; fighting; fluttering; dying. Aboard the *Beaudry*, Bernisty was well-pleased and once more jovial.

He clapped Blandwick on the back. "Not only do we call the city after you, we prefix your name to an entire system of philosophy, the Blandwick method."

Blandwick was unmoved by the tribute. "Regardless of the success of 'the Blandwick method', as you call it, the Kay still have a word to say."

"What can they do?" argued Bernisty. "They can liberate creatures no more unique or ravenous than those we ourselves have loosed. Anything the Kay send to New Earth now, is in the nature of anti-climax."

Blandwick smiled sourly. "Do you think they'll give up quite so easily?"

Bernisty became uneasy, and went off in search of Berel. "Well, play-girl," he demanded, "what does your intuition tell you now?"

"It tells me," she snapped, "that whenever you are the most optimistic, 'the Kay are on the verge of their most devastating attacks.'"

Bernisty put on a facetious front. "And when will these attacks take place?"

"Ask your spy-woman; she communicates secrets freely to anyone."

"Very well," said Bernisty. "Find her, if you please, and send her to me."

•

Kathryn appeared, "Yes, Bernisty?"

"I am curious," said Bernisty, "as to what you communicate to the Kay."

Kathryn said, "I tell them that Bernisty is defeating them, that he has countered their worst threats."

"And what do they tell you?"

"They tell me nothing."

"And what do you recommend?"

"I recommend that they either win at a massive single stroke, or give up."

"How do you tell them this?"

Kathryn laughed, showing her pretty white teeth. "I talk to them just as now I talk to you."

"And when do you think they will strike?"

"I don't know.... It seems that certainly they are long overdue. Would you not think so?"

"Yes," admitted Bernisty, and turned his head to find Bufco the radioman approaching.

"Kay ships," said Bufco. "A round dozen—mountainous barrels! They made one circuit—departed!"

"Well," said Bernisty, "this is it." He turned upon Kathryn the level look of cold speculation, and she returned the expression of smiling demureness which both of them had come to find familiar.

5



IN THREE days, every living thing on New Earth was dead. Not merely dead, but dissolved into a viscous gray syrup which sank into the plain, trickled like sputum down the crags, evaporated into the

wind. The effect was miraculous. Where the jungle had thronged the plain—now only plain existed, and already the wind was blowing up dust-devils.

There was one exception to the universal dissolution—the monstrous moths, which by some unknown method, or chemical make-up, had managed to survive. Across the wind they soared; frail fluttering shapes, seeking their former sustenance and finding nothing now but desert.

Aboard the *Beaudry* there was bewilderment; then dejection; then dull rage which could find no overt outlet, until at last Bernisty fell into a sleep.

He awoke with a sense of vague uneasiness, of trouble: the collapse of

the New Earth ecology? No. Something deeper, more immediate. He jumped into his clothes, hastened to the saloon. It was nearly full, and gave off a sense of grim malice.

Kathryn sat pale, tense in a chair; behind her stood Banta with a garrote. He was clearly preparing to strangle her, with the rest of the crew as collaborators.

Bernisty stepped across the saloon, broke Banta's jaw and broke the fingers of his clenched fist. Kathryn sat looking up silently.

"Well, you miserable renegades," Bernisty began; but looking around the wardroom, he found no sheepishness, only growing anger, defiance. "What goes on here?" roared Bernisty.

"She is a traitor," said Berel; "we execute her."

"How can she be a traitor? She never promised us faith!"

"She is certainly a spy!"

Bernisty laughed. "She has never dissembled the fact that she communicates with the Kay. How can she then be a spy?"

No one made reply, there was uneasy shifting of eyes.

Bernisty kicked Banta who was rising to his feet. "Get away, you cur. . . . I'll have no murderers, no lynchers in my crew!"

Berel cried, "She betrayed us!"

"How could she betray us? She never asked us to give her trust. Quite the reverse; she came to us frankly as a Kay; frankly she tells me she reports to the Kay."

"But how?" sneered Berel. "She claims to talk to them—to make you believe she jokes!"

Bernisty regarded Kathryn with the speculative glance. "If I read her character right, Kathryn tells no untruths. It is her single defense. If she says she talks to the Kay, so she does. . . ." He turned to the medic, "Bring an infrascopes."

The infrascopes revealed strange black shadows inside Kathryn's body. A small button beside her larynx; two

slim boxes flat against her diaphragm; wires running down under the skin of each leg.

"What is this?" gasped the medic.

"Internal radio," said Bufco. "The button takes her voice, the antenna are the leg-wires. What better equipment for a spy?"

"She is no spy, I tell you!" Bernisty bellowed. "The fault lies not with her—it lies with me! She *told* me! If I had asked her how her voice got to the Kay, she would have told me—candidly, frankly. I never asked her; I chose to regard the entire affair as a game! If you must garrot someone—garrot me! I am the betrayer—not she!"

Berel turned, walked from the wardroom, others followed. Bernisty turned to Kathryn. "Now—now what will you do? Your venture is a success."

"Yes," said Kathryn, "a success." She likewise left the wardroom. Bernisty followed curiously. She went to the outdoor locker, put on her head-dome, opened the double-lock, stepped out upon the dead plain.

BERNISTY watched her from a window. Where would she walk to? Nowhere. . . . She walked to death, like one walking into the surf and swimming straight out to sea. Overhead the giant moths fluttered, flickered down on the wind. Kathryn looked up; Bernisty saw her cringe. A moth flapped close, strove to seize her. She ducked; the wind caught the frail wings, and the moth wheeled away.

Bernisty chewed his lip; then laughed. "Devil take all; devil take the Kay; devil take all. . . ." He jammed on his own head-dome.

Bufco caught his arm. "Bernisty, where do you go?"

"She is brave, she is steadfast; why should she die?"

"She is our enemy!"

"I prefer a brave enemy to cowardly friends." He ran from the ship, across the soft loess now crusted with dried slime.

The moths fluttered, plunged. One clung to Kathryn's shoulders with barbed legs; she struggled, beat with futile hands at the great soft shape.

Shadows fell over Bernisty; he saw the purple-red glinting of big eyes, the impersonal visage. He swung a fist, felt the chitin crunch. Sick pangs of pain reminded him that the hand had already been broken on Banta's jaw. With the moth flapping on the ground he ran off down the wind. Kathryn lay supine, a moth probing her with a tube ill-adapted to cutting plastics and cloth.

Bernisty called out encouragement; a shape swooped on his back, bore him to the ground. He rolled over, kicked; arose, jumped to his feet, tackled the moth on Kathryn, tore off the wings, snapped the head up.

He turned to fight the other swooping shapes but now from the ship came Bufco, with a needle-beam puncturing moths from the sky, and others behind him.

Bernisty carried Kathryn back to the ship. He took her to the surgery, laid her on the pallet. "Cut that radio out of her," he told the medic. "Make her normal, and then if she gets information to the Kay, they'll deserve it."



He found Berel in his quarters, lounging in garments of seductive diaphane. He swept her with an indifferent glance.

Conquering her perturbation she asked, "Well, what now, Bernisty?"

"We start again!"

"Again? When the Kay can sweep the world of life so easy?"

"This time we work differently."

"So?"

"Do you know the ecology of Kerrykirk, the Kay capitol world?"

"No."

"In six months—you will find New Earth as close a duplicate as we are able."

"But that is foolhardy! What other

pests will the Kay know so well as those of their own world?"

"Those are my own views."

Bernisty presently went to the surgery. The medic handed him the international radio. Bernisty stared. "What are these—these little bors?"

"They are persuaders," said the medic. "They can be easily triggered to red-heat..."

Bernisty said abruptly, "Is she awake?"

"Yes."

Bernisty looked down into the pale face. "You have no more radio."

"I know."

"Will you spy any longer?"

"No. I give you my loyalty, my love."

Bernisty nodded, touched her face, turned, left the room, went to give his orders for a new planet.

BERNISTY ordered stocks from Blue Star: Kerrykirk flora and fauna exclusively and set them out as conditions justified. Three months passed uneventfully. The plants of Kerrykirk thrived; the air became rich; New Earth felt its first rains.

Kerrykirk trees and cycads sprouted, grew high, forced by growth hormones; the plains grew knee-deep with Kerrykirk grasses.

Then once again came the Kay ships; and now it was as if they played a sly game, conscious of power. The first infestations were only mild harassments.

Bernisty grinned, and released Kerrykirk amphibians into the new puddles. Now the Kay ships came at almost regular intervals, and each vessel brought pests more virulent or voracious; and the *Beaudry* technicians worked incessantly countering the successive invasions.

There was grumbling; Bernisty sent those who wished to go home to Blue Star. Berel departed; her time as a play-girl was finished. Bernisty felt a trace of guilt as she bade him dignified farewell. When he returned to his

quarters and found Kathryn there, the guilt disappeared.

The Kay ships came; a new horde of hungry creatures came to devastate the land.

Some of the crew cried defeat, "Where will it end? It is incessant; let us give up this thankless task!"

Others spoke of war. "Is not New Earth already a battleground?"

Bernisty waved a careless hand. "Patience, patience; just one more month."

"Why one more month?"

"Do you not understand? The Kay ecologists are straining their laboratories breeding these pests!"

"Ah!"

One more month, one more Kay visitation, a new rain of violent life, eager to combat the life of New Earth.

"Now!" said Bernisty.

The *Beaudry* technicians collected the latest arrivals, the most effective of the previous cargoes; they were bred; the seeds, spores, eggs, prepared carefully stored, packed.

One day a ship left New Earth and flew to Kerrykirk, the holds bulging with the most desperately violent enemies of Kerrykirk life that Kerrykirk scientists could find. The ship returned

to New Earth with its holds empty. Not till six months later did news of the greatest plagues in history seep out past Kay censorship.

During this time there were no Kay visits to New Earth. "And if they are discreet," Bernisty told the serious man from Blue Star who had come to replace him, "they will never come again. They are too vulnerable to their own pests—so long as we maintain a Kerrykirk ecology."

"Protective coloration, you might say," remarked the new governor of New Earth with a thin-lipped smile.

"Yes, you might say so."

"And what do you do, Bernisty?"

Bernisty listened. A far-off hum came to their ears. "That," said Bernisty, "is the *Blauchm*, arriving from Blue Star. And it's mine for another flight, another exploration."

"You seek another New Earth?"

And the thin-lipped smile became broader, with the unconscious superiority the settled man feels for the wanderer.

"Perhaps I'll even find Old Earth.... Hm...." He kicked up a bit of chrome stamped with the letters FORD. "Curious bit, this..."



Coming Next Issue

It seems that the boys at top have been running out of classifications for stuff that's not to be talked about. There was *Restricted*, and *Secret*, and *Top Secret* . . . and finally, a classification to end all secret classifications. A project so secret that the member couldn't even reveal it to himself. This was

GRAVEYARD

An Unusual, Powerful Novelet

by Gordon Dickson

Watch for
the July

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

Here, at last is the great
story, as it will be told
by our descendants . . .

Our Feature Story
by William Tenn

LIBERATION OF EARTH

(illustrated by Paul Orban)



THIS, THEN is the story of our liberation. Suck air and grab clusters. Heigh-ho, here is the tale.

August was the month, a Tuesday in August. These words are meaningless now, so far have we progressed; but many things known and discussed by our primitive ancestors, our unliberated, unreconstructed forefathers, are devoid of sense to our free minds.

Still the tale must be told, with all of its incredible place-names and vanished points of reference.

Why must it be told? Have any of you a *better* thing to do? We have had water and weeds and lie in a valley of gusts. So rest, relax and listen. And suck air, suck air.

On a Tuesday in August, the ship appeared in the sky over France in a part of the world then known as Eu-

rope. Five miles long the ship was, and word has come down to us that it^m looked like an enormous silver cigar.

The tale goes on to tell of the panic and consternation among our forefathers when the ship abruptly materialized in the summer-blue sky. How they ran, how they shouted, how they pointed!

How they excitedly notified the United Nations, one of their chiefest institutions, that a strange metal craft of incredible size had materialized over their land. How they sent an order *here* to cause military aircraft to surround it with loaded weapons, gave instructions *there* for hastily-grouped scientists, with signaling apparatus, to approach it with friendly gestures. How, under the great ship, men with cameras took pictures of it; men with typewriters wrote stories about it; and men with concessions sold models of it.

All these things did our ancestors, enslaved and unknowing, do.

Then a tremendous slab snapped up in the middle of the ship and the first of the aliens stepped out in the complex tripod gait that all humans were shortly to know and love so well. He wore a metallic garment to protect him from the effects of our atmospheric peculiarities, a garment of the opaque, loosely-folded type that these, the first of our liberators, wore throughout their stay on Earth.

Speaking in a language none could understand, but booming deafeningly through a huge mouth about halfway up his twenty-five feet of height, the alien discoursed for exactly one hour, waited politely for a response when he had finished, and, receiving none, retired into the ship.

That night, the first of our liberation! Or the first of our first liberation, should I say? *That* night, anyhow! Visualize our ancestors scurrying about their primitive intricacies: playing ice-hockey, televising, smashing atoms, red-baiting, conducting giveaway shows and signing affidavits—all the incredible minutiae that

made the olden times such a frightful mass of cumulative detail in which to live—as compared with the breathless and majestic simplicity of the present.

THE BIG question, of course, was —what had the alien said? Had he called on the human race to surrender? Had he announced that he was on a mission of peaceful trade and, having made what he considered a reasonable offer—for, let us say, the north polar ice-cap—politely withdrawn so that we could discuss his terms among ourselves in relative privacy? Or, possibly, had he merely announced that he was the newly appointed ambassador to Earth from a friendly and intelligent race—and would we please direct him to the proper authority so that he might submit his credentials?

Not to know was quite maddening.

Since decision rested with the diplomats, it was the last possibility which was held, very late that night, to be most likely; and early the next morning, accordingly, a delegation from the United Nations waited under the belly of the motionless star-ship. The delegation had been instructed to welcome the aliens to the outer-most limits of its collective linguistic ability. As an additional earnest of mankind's friendly intentions, all military craft patrolling the air about the great ship were ordered to carry no more than one atom-bomb in their racks, and to fly a small white flag—along with the U.N. banner and their own national emblem.

Thus, did our ancestors face this, the ultimate challenge of history.

When the alien came forth a few hours later, the delegation stepped up to him, bowed, and, in the three official languages of the United Nations—English, French and Russian—asked him to consider this planet his home. He listened to them gravely, and then launched into his talk of the day before—which was evidently as highly charged with emotion and signifi-

cance to him, as it was completely incomprehensible to the representatives of world government.

Fortunately, a cultivated young Indian member of the secretariat detected a suspicious similarity between the speech of the alien and an obscure Bengali dialect whose anomalies he had once puzzled over. The reason, as we all know *now*, was that the last time Earth had been visited by Aliens of this particular type, humanity's most advanced civilization lay in a moist valley in Bengal; extensive dictionaries of that language had been written, so that speech with the natives of Earth would present no problem to any subsequent exploring-party.

However, I move ahead of my tale, as one who would munch on the succulent roots before the dryer stem. Let me rest and suck air for a moment. Heigh-ho, truly those were tremendous experiences for our kind.

You, sir, now you sit back and listen. You are not yet of an age to Tell the Tale. I remember, *well enough do I remember* how my father told it, and his father before him. You will wait your turn as I did; you will listen until too much high land between water holes blocks me off from life.

Then *you* may take your place in the juiciest weed-patch and, reclining gracefully between sprints, recite the great epic of our liberation to the carelessly exercising young.

PURSUANT to the young Hindu's suggestions, the one professor of comparative linguistics in the world capable of understanding and conversing in this peculiar version of the dead dialect, was summoned from an academic convention in New York where he was reading a paper he had been working on for eighteen years: *An Initial Study of Apparent Relationships Between Several Past Participles in Ancient Sanscrit and an Equal Number of Noun Substantives in Modern Szechuanese*.

Yea, verily, all these things—and more, many more—did our ancestors

in their besotted ignorance contrive to do. May we not count our freedoms indeed?

The disgruntled scholar, minus—as he kept insisting bitterly—some of his most essential word-lists, was flown by fastest jet to the area south of Nancy which, in those long-ago days, lay in the enormous black shadow of the alien space-ship.

Here he was acquainted with his task by the United Nations delegation, whose nervousness had not been allayed by a new and disconcerting development. Several more aliens had emerged from the ship carrying great quantities of immense, shimmering metal which they proceeded to assemble into something that was obviously a machine—though it was taller than any skyscraper man had ever built, and seemed to make noises to itself like a talkative and sentient creature. The first alien still stood courteously in the neighborhood of the profusely perspiring diplomats; ever and anon he would go through his little speech again, in a language that had been almost forgotten when the cornerstone of the library of Alexandria was laid. The men from the U.N. would reply, each one hoping desperately to make up for the alien's lack of familiarity with his own tongue by such devices as hand-gestures and facial expressions. Much later, a commission of anthropologists and psychologists brilliantly pointed out the difficulties of such physical communication with creatures possessing—as these aliens did—five manual appendages and a single, unwinking compound eye of the type the insects rejoice in.

The problems and agonies of the professor as he was trundled about the world in the wake of the aliens, trying to amass a usable vocabulary in a language whose peculiarities he could only extrapolate from the limited samples supplied him by one who must inevitably speak it with the most outlandish of foreign accents—these vexations were minor indeed compared to the disquiet felt by the representatives

of world government. They beheld the extra-terrestrial visitors move every day to a new site on their planet and proceed to assemble there a titanic structure of flickering metal which muttered nostalgically to itself, as if to keep alive the memory of those far-away factories which had given it birth.

True, there was always the alien who would pause in his evidently supervisory labors to release the set little speech; but not even the excellent manners he displayed, in listening to upwards of fifty-six replies in as many languages, helped dispel the panic caused whenever a human scientist, investigating the shimmering machines, touched a projecting edge and promptly shrank into a disappearing pinpoint. This, while not a frequent occurrence, happened often enough to cause chronic indigestion and insomnia among human administrators.

FINALLY, having used up most of his nervous-system as fuel, the professor collated enough of the language to make conversation possible. He—and, through him, the world—were thereupon told the following:

The aliens were members of a highly-advanced civilization which had spread its culture throughout the entire galaxy. Cognizant of the limitations of the as-yet-underdeveloped animals who had latterly become dominant upon Earth, they had placed us in a sort of benevolent ostracism. Until either we or our institutions would have evolved to a level permitting, say, at least *associate* membership in the galactic federation (under the sponsoring tutelage, for the first few millennia, of one of the older, more widespread and more important species in that federation)—until that time, all invasions of our privacy and ignorance—except for a few scientific expeditions conducted under conditions of great secrecy—had been strictly forbidden by universal agreement.

Several individuals who had violated this ruling—at great cost to our racial

sanity, and enormous profit to our reigning religions—had been so promptly and severely punished that no known infringements had occurred for some time. Our recent growth-curve had been satisfactory enough to cause hopes that a bare thirty or forty centuries more would suffice to place us on applicant status with the federation.

Unfortunately, the peoples of this stellar community were many, and varied as greatly in their ethical outlook as their biological composition. Quite a few species lagged a considerable social distance behind the Dendi, as our visitors called themselves. One of these, a race of horrible, worm-like organisms known as the Troxxt—almost as advanced technologically as they were retarded in moral development—had suddenly volunteered for the position of sole and absolute ruler of the galaxy. They had seized control of several key suns, with their attendant planetary-systems, and, after a calculated decimation of the races thus captured, had announced their intention of punishing with a merciless extinction all species unable to appreciate from these object-lessons the value of unconditional surrender.

In despair, the galactic federation had turned to the Dendi, one of the oldest, most selfless, and yet most powerful of races in civilized space, and commissioned them—as the military arm of the federation—to hunt down the Troxxt, defeat them wherever they had gained illegal suzerainty, and destroy forever their power to wage war.

This order had come almost too late. Everywhere the Troxxt had gained so much the advantage of attack, that the Dendi were able to contain them only by enormous sacrifice. For centuries now, the conflict had careened across our vast island universe. In the course of it, densely-populated planets had been disintegrated; suns had been blasted into novae; and whole groups of stars ground into swirling cosmic dust.

A temporary stalemate had been reached a short while ago, and—reeling and breathless—both sides were using the lull to strengthen weak spots in their perimeter.

Thus, the Troxxt had finally moved into the till-then peaceful section of space that contained our solar-system—among others. They were thoroughly uninterested in our tiny planet with its meager resources; nor did they care much for such celestial neighbors as Mars or Jupiter. They established their headquarters on a planet of Proxima Centaurus—the star nearest our own sun—and proceeded to consolidate their offensive-defensive network between Rigel and Aldebaran. At this point in their explanation, the Dendi pointed out, the exigencies of interstellar strategy tended to become too complicated for anything but three-dimensional maps; let us here accept the simple statement, they suggested, that it became immediately vital for them to strike rapidly, and make the Troxxt position on Proxima Centaurus untenable—to establish a base inside their lines of communication.

The most likely spot for such a base was Earth.

THE DENDI apologized profusely for intruding on our development, an intrusion which might cost us dear in our delicate developmental state. But, as they explained—in impeccable pre-Bengali—before their arrival we had, in effect, become (all unknowingly) a satrapy of the awful Troxxt. We could now consider ourselves liberated.

We thanked them much for that.

Besides, their leader pointed out proudly, the Dendi were engaged in a war for the sake of civilization itself, against an enemy so horrible, so obscene in its nature, and so utterly filthy in its practices, that it was unworthy of the label of intelligent life. They were fighting, not only for themselves, but for every loyal member of the galactic federation; for every small and helpless species; for every obscure

race too weak to defend itself against a ravaging conqueror. Would humanity stand aloof from such a conflict?

There was just a slight bit of hesitation as the information was digested. Then—“*No!*” humanity roared back through such mass-communication media as television, newspapers, reverberating jungle drums and mule-mounted backwoods messenger. “*We will not stand aloof! We will help you destroy this menace to the very fabric of civilization! Just tell us what you want us to do!*”

Well, nothing in particular, the aliens replied with some embarrassment. Possibly in a little while there might be something—several little things, in fact—which could be quite useful; but, for the moment, if we would concentrate on not getting in their way when they serviced their gun-mounts, they would be very grateful, really...

This reply tended to create a small amount of uncertainty among the two billion of Earth's human population. For several days afterwards, there was a planet-wide tendency—the legend has come down to us—of people failing to meet each other's eyes, an evident discomfort in looking at any other person directly.

But then Man rallied from this substantial punch to his pride. He would be useful, be it ever so humbly, to the race which had liberated him from potential subjugation by the ineffably ugly Troxxt. For this, let us remember well our ancestors! Let us hymn their sincere efforts amid their ignorance!

All standing armies, all air and sea fleets, were reorganized into guard-patrols around the Dendi weapons: no human might approach within two miles of the murmuring machinery, without a pass counter-signed by the Dendi. Since they were never known to sign such a pass during the entire period of their stay on this planet, however, this loophole-provision was never exercised as far as is known; and the immediate neighborhood of the

extra-terrestrial weapons became and remained thenceforth antiseptically free of two-legged creatures.

COOPERATION with our liberators took precedence over all other human activities. The order of the day was a slogan first given voice by a Harvard Professor of Government in a querulous radio round-table on "Man's Place in a Somewhat Over-Civilized Universe."

"Let us forget our individual egos and collective conceits," the professor cried at one point. "Let us subordinate everything—to the end that the freedom of the Solar System in general, and Earth in particular, must and shall be preserved!"

Despite—and possibly because of—its mouth-filling qualities, this slogan was repeated everywhere.

Still, it was difficult sometimes to know exactly what the Dendi wanted—partly because of the limited number of interpreters of the only Earth-tongue the aliens knew, that were available to the heads of the various sovereign states, and partly because of their leader's tendency to vanish into his ship after ambiguous and equivocal statements—such as the curt admonition to "Evacuate Washington!"

On that occasion, both the Secretary of State and the American President, himself, perspired through five hours of a July day in all the silk-hatted, stiff-collared, dark-suited diplomatic regalia that the barbaric past demanded of political leaders who would deal with the representatives of another people. They waited and wilted beneath the enormous ship—which no human had ever been invited to enter, despite the wistful hints constantly thrown out by university professors and aeronautical designers—they waited patiently and wetly for the Dendi leader to emerge and let them know whether he had meant the State of Washington or Washington, D. C.

The tale comes down to us at this

point as a tale of glory. The capitol building taken apart in a few days, and set up almost intact in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains; the missing Archives, that were later to turn up in the Children's Room of a Public Library in Duluth, Iowa; the bottles of Potomac River water carefully borne westward and ceremoniously poured into the circular concrete ditch built around the President's mansion (from which unfortunately it was to evaporate within a week because of the relatively low humidity of the region)—all these are proud moments in the galactic history of our species, from which not even the later knowledge that the Dendi wished to build no gun-site on the spot, nor even an ammunition dump, but merely a recreation-hall for their troops, could remove any of the grandeur of our determined cooperation and most willing sacrifice.

There is no denying, however, that the ego of our race was greatly damaged by the discovery, in the course of a routine journalistic interview, that the aliens totaled no more powerful a group than a squad; and that their leader, instead of the great scientist and key military-strategist that we might justifiably have expected the Galactic Federation to furnish for the protection of Terra, ranked as the interstellar equivalent of a buck sergeant.

That the President of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Navy, had waited in such obeisant fashion upon a mere non-commissioned officer was hard for us to swallow; but that the impending Battle of Earth was to have a historical dignity only slightly higher than that of a patrol action was impossibly humiliating.

AND THEN there was the matter of "lendi."

The aliens, while installing or servicing their planet-wide weapon system, would occasionally fling aside an evidently-unusable fragment of the

talking metal. Separated from the machine of which it had been a component, the substance seemed to lose all those qualities which were deleterious to mankind and retain several which were quite useful indeed. For example, if a portion of the strange material were attached to any terrestrial metal—and insulated carefully, with standard dielectrics, from contact with other substances—it would, in a few hours, itself become exactly the metal that it touched, whether that happened to be zinc, gold or pure uranium.

This stuff—"lendi", men had heard the aliens call it—was shortly in frantic demand in an economy ruptured by constant and unexpected emptyings of its most important industrial-centers.

Everywhere the aliens went, to and from their weapon-sites, hordes of ragged humans stood chanting—well outside the two-mile limit—"Any lendi, Dendi?"

All attempts by law-enforcement agencies of the planet to put a stop to this shameless, wholesale begging were useless—especially since the Dendi themselves seemed to get some unexplainable pleasure out of scattering tiny pieces of lendi to the scrabbling multitude. When policemen and soldiery began to join the trampling, murderous dash to the corner of the meadows, wherein had fallen the highly-versatile and garrulous metal, governments gave up.

Mankind almost began to hope for the attack to come, so that it would be relieved of the festering consideration of its own patent inferiorities. A few of the more fanatically-conservative among our ancestors probably even began to regret liberation.

They did, children; they did! Let us hope that these would-be troglodytes were among the very first to be dissolved and melted down by the red flame-balls. One cannot, after all, turn one's back on progress!

Two days before the month of September was over, the aliens announced that they had detected activity upon

one of the moons of Saturn. The Troxxt were evidently threading their treacherous way inward through the solar system. Considering their vicious and deceitful propensities, the Dendi warned, an attack from these worm-like monstrosities might be expected at any moment.

Few humans went to sleep as the night rolled up to and past the meridian on which they dwelt. Almost all eyes were lifted to a sky carefully denuded of clouds by watchful Dendi. There was a brisk trade in cheap telescopes and bits of smoked glass in some sections of the planet; while other portions experienced a substantial boom in spells and charms of the all-inclusive, or omnibus, variety.

THE TROXXT attacked in three cylindrical black ships simultaneously; one in the Southern Hemisphere, and two in the Northern. Great gouts of green flame roared out of their tiny craft; and everything that this flame touched imploded into a translucent, glass-like sand. No Dendi was hurt by these, however, and from each of the now-writhing gun-mounts there bubbled forth a series of scarlet clouds which pursued the Troxxt hungrily, until forced by a dwindling velocity to fall back upon Earth.

Here they had an unhappy after-effect. Any populated area into which these pale pink cloudlets chanced to fall was rapidly transformed into a cemetery—a cemetery, if the truth be told as it has been handed down to us, that had more the odor of the kitchen than the grave. The inhabitants of these unfortunate localities were subjected to enormous increases of temperature. Their skin reddened, then blackened; their hair and nails shriveled; their very flesh turned into liquid and boiled off their bones. Altogether a disagreeable way for one-tenth of the human race to die.

The only consolation was the capture of a black cylinder by one of the red clouds. When, as a result of this,

it had turned white-hot and poured its substance down in the form of a metallic rainstorm, the two ships assailing the Northern Hemisphere abruptly retreated to the asteroids into which the Dendi—because of severely-limited numbers—steadfastly refused to pursue them.

In the next twenty-four hours the aliens—*resident* aliens, let us say—held conferences, made repairs to their weapons and commiserated with us. Humanity buried its dead. This last was a custom of our forefathers that was most worthy of note; and one that has not, of course, survived into modern times.

By the time the Troxxt returned, Man was ready for them. He could not, unfortunately, stand to arms as he most ardently desired to do; but he could and did stand to optical instrument and conjurer's oration.

Once more the little red clouds burst joyfully into the upper reaches of the stratosphere; once more the green flames wailed and tore at the chattering spires of lendi; once more men died by the thousands in the boiling backwash of war. But this time, there was a slight difference: the green flames of the Troxxt abruptly changed color after the engagement had lasted three hours; they became darker, more bluish. And, as they did so, Dendi after Dendi collapsed at his station and died in convulsions.

The call for retreat was evidently sounded. The survivors fought their way to the tremendous ship in which they had come. With an explosion from her stern jets that blasted a red-hot furrow southward through France, and kicked Marseilles into the Mediterranean, the ship roared into space and fled home ignominiously.

Humanity steeled itself for the coming ordeal of horror under the Troxxt.

THEY WERE truly worm-like in form. As soon as the two night-black cylinders had landed, they strode, from their ships, their tiny segmented bodies held off the ground by

a complex harness supported by long and slender metal crutches. They erected a dome-like fort around each ship—one in Australia and one in the Ukraine—captured the few courageous individuals who had ventured close to their landing-sites, and disappeared back into the dark craft with their squirming prizes.

While some men drilled about nervously in the ancient military patterns, others poured anxiously over scientific texts and records pertaining to the visit of the Dendi—in the desperate hope of finding a way of preserving terrestrial independence against this ravening conqueror of the star-spattered galaxy.

And yet all this time, the human captives inside the artificially-darkened spaceships (the Troxxt, having no eyes, not only had little use for light but the more sedentary individuals among them actually found such radiation disagreeable to their sensitive, unpigmented skins) were not being tortured for information—nor vivisected in the earnest quest of same on a slightly higher level—but educated.

Educated in the Troxxtian language, that is.

True it was that a large number found themselves utterly inadequate for the task which the Troxxt had set them, and temporarily became servants to the more successful students. And another, albeit smaller, group developed various forms of frustration hysteria—ranging from mild unhappiness to complete catatonic depression—over the difficulties presented by a language whose every verb was irregular, and whose myriads of prepositions were formed by noun-adjective combinations derived from the subject of the previous sentence. But, eventually, eleven human beings were released, to blink madly in the sunlight as certified interpreters of Troxxt.

These liberators, it seemed, had never visited Bengal in the heyday of its millennia-past civilization.

Yes, these *liberators*. For the

Troxxt had landed on the sixth day of the ancient, almost mythical, month of October. And October the Sixth is, of course, the Holy Day of the Second Liberation. Let us remember, let us revere. If only we could figure out which day it is on our calendar!

THE TALE the interpreters told caused men to hang their heads in shame and gnash their teeth at the deception they had allowed the Dendi to practice upon them.

True, the Dendi had been commissioned by the Galactic Federation to hunt the Troxxt down and destroy them. This was largely because the Dendi were the Galactic Federation. One of the first intelligent arrivals on the interstellar scene, the huge creatures had organized a vast police-force to protect them and their power against any contingency of revolt that might arise in the future. This police-force was ostensibly a congress of all thinking lifeforms throughout the galaxy; actually, it was an efficient means of keeping them under rigid control.

Most species thus far discovered were docile and tractable, however: the Dendi had been ruling from time immemorial, said they—very well, then, let the Dendi continue to rule. Did it make that much difference?

But, throughout the centuries, opposition to the Dendi grew—and the nuclei of the opposition were the protoplasm-based creatures. What, in fact, had come to be known as the Protoplasmic League.

Though small in number, the creatures whose life-cycles were derived from the chemical and physical properties of protoplasm varied greatly in size, structure and specialization. A galactic community deriving the main wells of its power from them would be a dynamic instead of a static place, where extra-galactic travel would be encouraged—instead of being inhibited, as it was at present because of Dendi fears of meeting a superior civilization. It would be a true democracy of species—a real

biological republic—where all creatures of adequate intelligence and cultural development would enjoy a control of their destinies at present experienced by the silicon-based Dendi alone.

To this end, the Troxxt—the only important race which had steadfastly refused the complete surrender of armaments demanded of all members of the Federation—had been implored by a minor member of the Protoplasmic League to rescue it from the devastation which the Dendi intended to visit upon it, as punishment for an unlawful exploratory excursion outside the boundaries of the galaxy.

Faced with the determination of the Troxxt to defend their cousins in organic chemistry, and the suddenly-aroused hostility of at least two-thirds of the interstellar peoples, the Dendi had summoned a rump meeting of the Galactic Council; declared a state of revolt in being; and proceeded to cement their disintegrating rule with the blasted life-forces of a hundred worlds. The Troxxt, hopelessly out-numbered and out-equipped, had been able to continue the struggle only because of the great ingenuity and selflessness of other members of the Protoplasmic League, who had risked extinction to supply them with newly-developed secret weapons.

Hadn't we guessed the nature of the beast from the enormous precautions it had taken to prevent the exposure of any part of its body to the intensely-corrosive atmosphere of Earth? Surely the seamless, barely-translucent suits which our recent visitors had worn for every moment of their stay on our world should have made us suspect a body-chemistry developed from complex silicon compounds rather than those of carbon?

Humanity hung its collective head and admitted that the suspicion had never occurred to it.

Well, the Troxxt admitted generously, we were extremely inexperienced and possibly a little too trusting. Put it down to that. Our naivete, however

costly to them—our liberators—would not be allowed to deprive us of that complete citizenship which the Troxxt were claiming as the birthright of all.

But as for our leaders, our probably-corrupted, certainly irresponsible leaders...

THE FIRST executions of U.N. officials, heads of states and pre-Bengali interpreters as "Traitors to Protoplasm"—after some of the lengthiest and most nearly-perfectly-fair trials in the history of Earth—were held a week after G-J Day, the inspiring occasion on which—amidst gorgeous ceremonies—humanity was invited to join, first the Protoplasmic League and thence the New and Democratic Galactic Federation of All Species, All Races.

Nor was that all.

Whereas the Dendi had contemptuously shoved us to one side as they went about their business of making our planet safe for tyranny, and had—in all probability—built special devices which made the very touch of their weapons fatal for us, the Troxxt—with the sincere friendliness which had made their name a byword for democracy and decency wherever living creatures came together among the stars—our Second Liberators, as we lovingly called them, actually *preferred* to have us help them with the intensive, accelerating labor of planetary defense.

So men's intestines dissolved under the invisible glare of the forces used to assemble the new, incredibly-complex weapons; men sickened and died, in scrabbling hordes, inside the mines which the Troxxt had declared were deeper than any we had dug hitherto; men's bodies broke open and exploded in the undersea oil-drilling sites which the Troxxt had declared were essential.

Children's schooldays were requested, too, in such collecting drives as "Platinum Scrap for Procyon" and "Radioactive Debris for Deneb." Housewives also were implored to save

on salt whenever possible—this substance being useful to the Troxxt in literally dozens of incomprehensible ways—and colorful posters reminded: "*Don't salinate—sugarfy!*"

And over all—courteously caring for us like an intelligent parent—were our mentors, taking their giant supervisory strides on metallic crutches, while their pale little bodies lay curled in the hammocks that swung from each paired length of shining leg.

Truly, even in the midst of a complete economic paralysis caused by the concentration of all major productive facilities on other-worldly armaments and despite the anguished cries of those suffering from peculiar industrial injuries which our medical men were totally unequipped to handle, in the midst of all this mind-wracking disorganization, it was yet very exhilarating to realize that we had taken our lawful place in the future government of the galaxy and were even now helping to make the Universe Safe for Democracy.

BUT THE Dendi returned to smash this idyll. They came in their huge, silvery space-ships and the Troxxt, barely warned in time, just managed to rally under the blow and fight back in kind. Even so, the Troxxt ship in the Ukraine was almost immediately forced to flee to its base in the depths of space. After three days, the only Troxxt on Earth were the devoted members of a little band guarding the ship in Australia. They proved, in three or more months, to be as difficult to remove from the face of our planet as the continent itself; and since there was now a state of close and hostile siege, with the Dendi on one side of the globe, and the Troxxt on the other, the battle assumed frightful proportions.

Seas boiled; whole steppes burned away; the climate itself shifted and changed under the gruelling pressure of the cataclysm. By the time the Dendi solved the problem, the planet Venus had been blasted from the skies

In the course of a complicated battle-maneuver, and Earth had wobbled over as orbital substitute.

The solution was simple: since the Troxxt were too firmly-based on the small continent to be driven away, the numerically-superior Dendi brought up enough fire-power to disintegrate all of Australia into an ash that mud-died the Pacific. This occurred on the twenty-fourth of June, the Holy Day of First Reliberation.

A day of reckoning for what remained of the human race, however.

How could we have been so naive, the Dendi wanted to know, as to be taken in by the chauvinistic pro-protoplasm propaganda? Surely, if physical characteristics were to be the criteria of our racial empathy, we would not orient ourselves on a narrow chemical basis! The Dendi life-plasma was based on silicon instead of carbon, true, but did not vertebrates—*appendaged* vertebrates, at that, such as we and the Dendi—have infinitely more in common, in spite of a *minor* biochemical difference or two, than vertebrates and legless, armless, slime-crawling creatures who happened, quite accidentally, to possess an identical organic substance?

As for this fantastic picture of life in the galaxy...*Well!* The Dendi shrugged their quintuple shoulders as they went about the intricate business of erecting their noisy weapons all over the rubble of our planet. Had we ever seen a representative of these protoplasmic races the Troxxt were supposedly protecting? No, nor would we. For as soon as a race—animal, vegetable or mineral—developed enough to constitute even a *potential* danger to the sinuous aggressors, its civilization was systematically dismantled by the watchful Troxxt. We were in so primitive a state that they had not considered it at all risky to allow us the outward seeming of full participation.

Could we say we had learned a single useful piece of information about Troxxt technology—for all of the

work we had done on their machines, for all of the lives we had lost in the process? No, of course not! We had merely contributed our mite to the enslavement of far-off races who had done us no harm.

There was much that we had cause to feel guilty about, the Dendi told us gravely—once the few surviving interpreters of the pre-Bengali dialect had crawled out of hiding. But our collective onus was as nothing compared to that borne by “vermicular collaborationists”—those traitors who had supplanted our martyred *former* leaders. And then there were the unspeakable individual humans who had had linguistic traffic with creatures destroying a two-million-year-old galactic peace!

Why, killing was almost too good for them, the Dendi murmured as they killed them.

WHEN THE Troxxt ripped their way back into possession of Earth some eighteen months later, bringing us the sweet fruits of the Second Reliberation—as well as a complete and most convincing rebuttal of the Dendi—there were few humans found who were willing to accept with any real enthusiasm the responsibilities of newly-opened and highly-paid positions in language, science and government.

Of course, since the Troxxt, in order to reliberate Earth, had found it necessary to blast a tremendous chunk out of the northern hemisphere, there were very few humans to be found in the first place...

Even so, many of these committed suicide rather than assume the title of Secretary-General of the United Nations when the Dendi came back for the glorious Re-Reliberation, a short time after that. This was the liberation, by the way, which swept the deep collar of matter off our planet, and gave it what our forefathers came to call a pear-shaped look.

Possibly it was at this time—possibly a liberation or so later—that the

Troxxt and the Dendi discovered the Earth had become far too eccentric in its orbit to possess the minimum safety-conditions demanded of a Combat Zone. The battle, therefore, zig-zagged coruscatingly and murderously away in the direction of Aldebaran.

That was nine generations ago, but the tale that has been handed down from parent to child, to child's child, has lost little in the telling. You hear it now from me almost exactly as I heard it. From my father I heard it as I ran with him from water-puddle to distant water-puddle, across the searing heat of yellow sand. From my mother I heard it as we sucked air and frantically grabbed at clusters of thick green weed, whenever the planet beneath us quivered in omen of a geological spasm that might bury us in its burned-out body, or a cosmic gyration that threatened to fling us into empty space.

Yes, even as we do now did we do then, telling the same tale, running

the same frantic race across miles of unendurable heat for food and water; fighting the same savage battles with the giant rabbits for each other's car- rion—and always, ever and always, sucking desperately at the precious air, which leaves our world in greater quantities with every mad twist of its orbit.

Naked, hungry and thirsty came we into the world, and naked, hungry and thirsty do we scamper our lives out upon it, under the huge and never-changing sun.

The same tale it is, and the same traditional ending it has as that I had from my father and his father before him. Suck air, grab clusters and hear the last holy observation of our history:

"Looking about us, we can say with pardonable pride that we have been about as thoroughly liberated as it is possible for a race and a planet to be!"



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DYNAMIC
Science Fiction

TENTH-LEVEL ENIGMA

A Future "First" by Alfred Machado, Jr.

(illustrated by C. A. Murphy)

Heavy in Bec's heart was the suspicion that Kul might show an irrational strain on this all important expedition to the heights . . .



LORE TOLD of the strange things that fell from above; old tales whispered of life in the upper levels. The old chronicles were ignored, but there was Tolaan.

The mountain was deathly black, stark, impervious to life, and unyielding to assault. It wrapped itself in cold and darkness, taunting them with its mysteries and its unseen crest. They lived in the barren flatlands and, by uncanny skill and strength unequaled, wrested an existence from the cold earth. Great powers they had and yet they realized that they knew too little. Away in the vast distances, the flatlands rose upward to become unknown, unattainable heights. Comfort without toil was their hard-won right; and they might have claimed the fruit of their labor but for Tolaan. The mountain squatted arrogantly amid the flat-

lands, ever casting a discontent among them. The faraway peaks they might have forgotten, but Tolaan glowered down and thrust its chill aura into all their lives. The challenge rose blackly before them, and they fought for the treasure of Tolaan . . . knowledge.

For generations uncounted they struggled with enigmas and did not falter in their determination. Foremost among the present seekers was Kul, and now Tolaan had cheated him of truth again.

Kul had received the last message from the spheroid, had forwarded it to the school, and had sped from his city in a displacement vessel. Precautions were being taken in the Cities, and Bec had been sent to Tolaan to participate in Kul's investigation. An armed force was being organized for possible action.

Bec's roller carried him to the base of Tolaan and there, awaiting him, was the bulbous-hulled dis-ship. Kul exhibited immense impatience as Bec descended from the roller and removed his detector case from the machine.

"You came at your leisure," Kul grumbled.

"There was little information; we cannot act decisively upon vague implications."

"There was nothing vague about the destruction of the spheroid!"

"But what does that actually mean?" Bec persisted.

"It means that there is life above us... hostile, murdering life!" In those harsh words was a rage and a hate that startled Bec. The first chill of fear was upon him, for Kull was not aroused by phantoms.

The two entered the dis-ship and Bec carefully sealed the entrance. After fastening his detector-case to the hull, Bec joined Kul at the wheel. Vibration quivered along the deck as the pellet-tanks were evacuated Kul started the blades, and rotor-noise increased as the blades took hold and propelled the fat vessel forward and upward, at a constant acceleration. The wrinkled, sterile slopes of Tolaan passed below them; but, although they were ascending the apparent distance down the sharp-edged rocks did not increase.

"Why do we not rise straight up until we reach One?" Bec asked.

"I am keeping our altitude above the ridges to a minimum, because there may be a power-failure. I do not know how the K-gas will react under reduced pressure," replied Kul.

Bec looked rearward and saw the cylindrical tanks of gas which protruded into the after passage. And he realized that Tolaan was an obsession with Kul. To investigate an undoubtedly dangerous situation, Kul had selected an experimental ship and a little-understood fuel. Kul knew no caution or restraint in his battle with Tolaan.

"Start your detectors," Kul ordered suddenly.

Bec turned to his instrument-case and began to adjust the intensity-meters and the selective filters. He knew the values for One perfectly, and soon the blue glow of the off-course signal filled the chamber. Kul reset the wheel and the light quickly faded to the on-course minimum.

FROM THE dawn of time Tolaan had resisted life and, though the world abounded with creatures, none could exist on Tolaan. And then the science station had been built on Tolaan at the height of the third level, and it had been named One. It was a magnificent achievement and, perhaps more than anything else, it set the people apart from all other creatures; they knew themselves as conquerors, now. To reach the site of One, lift-ships had been invented—the most sublime of all advances—and, to maintain One amid that wilderness of stone, Kul had recently designed the displacement-vessel. The establishment of One had cost labor, material and lives but the effort had been richly rewarded for data in great volume now flowed from One. It was upon this new information that Kull had based his monumental discontinuity-theory. The ascent of the spheroid had been a supreme attempt to test Kul's theory, for its truth or falsity would ultimately affect the lives of all the people.

Soon the dis-ship was passing over the hemispherical dome of One, where a staff of technicians tended a vast array of recording-instruments. Here, at the beginning of the third level, the pressure was only four-fifths of normal, and the staff of One lived under constant pressurization. It seemed as if this bit of Tolaan was as barren as the rest; there was only that greyish dome to alter the eternal vista of rock and chasm. One had been in constant communication with the spheroid and had received, and had

relayed to Kul, that last fragment of a message.

"The spheroid carried radiation-sources which are still active, despite the spheroid's destruction," explained Kul. "One's detectors are much more powerful than your equipment, or the instruments of this ship. They are able to receive rays from the spheroid, although we cannot. They are to indicate the course to the spheroid, so stand by for a directional signal. Once we are within range of the sources, your detectors can guide us to the exact location of the wreck-age."

There was a flat lifelessness to Kul's words. It was clear that he lived only for the moments ahead. Bec was quick to note this ominous behavior; as a safety-monitor, Bec was well-versed in psychology—and yet he was baffled by the great change that the loss of the spheroid had wrought in Kul.

The instruments received a new beam from One, and the angry blue glow flared up again. With meticulous skill, Kul turned onto the new course and applied full power to the blades. The ship accelerated sickeningly and, in an instant, the lonely dome had vanished behind them. Their speed blurred the crooked ridges below into a vague, undulating mass that swept past the ports of the vessel. There were occasional sapphire flickers as Kul strayed from the beam; but he never slackened their speed, and they passed through the desolate third level in a very short time.

As they entered the fourth level, the detectors began pulsating redly. One was sending out a caution-signal and, a moment later, the guiding beam from One winked out. Evidently they were near the wreckage, where the beam from One would no longer be of use.

Bec reset his detectors to pick up the faint radiation from the spheroid, but there was no reaction. Kul reduced speed reluctantly, and watched

the instruments with a fearful intentness. There was no time for them in this period of suspense—only a seeming eternity of waiting for a signal from the dead. They exceeded the greatest height ever attained by lift-ships, but that passed unnoticed. The yellow, negative glow of the detectors mocked them.

The lack of a signal put a tremendous strain upon Bec. What if they could not find the spheroid? A vital part of Bec's task of securing data on the menace was the location and study of the spheroid fragments. The dis-ship slowed again, and began to move closer to the colossal bulk of Tolaan. Kul exerted his greatest skill and the ship crept upward on a spiral course.

MIDWAY into the fourth level, blue radiance burst from the detectors; they were on extreme off-course. Kul reversed the direction of the ship, and the glow began to wane. After dropping to a minimum, the blue fire rose again; they had passed over the spheroid. Kul turned the ship again and stopped the blades. A short distance below their hull were the murky rocks of Tolaan—the twisting crevasses filled with blackness, the immense, sheer-faced cliffs. It was a nothingness without life, without time. A broken trail of glittering dots that meandered down the tortuous slopes was the only clue; but at last, with intense concentration, they could distinguish the fragments of the spheroid. The great craft had been reduced to shards.

The dis-ship was drifting near the fragments, but Bec could not detect anything except the eternal radiation that had been incorporated in the spheroid. Life could not have survived the violence that had disintegrated the exploring-craft. There was a long silence as Kul examined the scene below. For a moment he was old, as he beheld the last resting-place of his three brilliant comrades, and the wreck of a lifetime of work. It was a

moment of foreboding for Bec; the monitors were sworn to guard the civil-safety, and now he was confronted with the ghastly evidence of an unknown foe of his people. Weaponless, the scientists had risen to sound the heights—and they had been murdered. Abruptly Kul started the blades and resumed the ascent at full speed.

"What was the weapon?" Bec asked.

Kul stared at him and, morbidly fascinated, Bec watched as hate and reason struggled for mastery over the scientist. And then the hate ebbed away, and Kul answered his question. "It was a weapon unused by our people—although the theoretical principle has been tested. The spheroid was probably destroyed by a device which created an expansion of force from a central point. Such a weapon is almost useless to us, because the pressure of our medium is so great that such a force expansion is ineffective—without the use of an impossibly large amount of base-material. In the reduced pressure of the upper levels, a device capable of creating a force-expansion would be incredibly deadly."

At the moment, Bec was more concerned with Kul's words than with the scientist's terrible thirst for vengeance. Weapons meant only one thing...the existence of intelligent life in the upper levels. The thought numbed him. "Do those creatures live in our medium, or beyond the discontinuity?"

Kul's theory of discontinuity had been the prime-mover in this series of events; his reply was carefully phrased, devoid of emotion. "All previous research has shown that, with increasing height, the density of our living-medium remains constant, while the pressure of the medium decreases linearly. The density of the medium is not significantly variable. With pressure-decreases directly related to height-increases, it follows that, at some great height, the pressure must be both simple and precise.

"I have determined that the zero-

reach zero; and, since the medium-density is constant, the calculations to obtain the zero-pressure point are pressure point occurs at a height arbitrarily named the tenth level. That level is the discontinuity, for it marks the limit of our medium; nothing is known of what exists within or beyond the tenth level. I can only assume that these creatures live in the topmost levels of our medium. But they will not live there much longer!"

Kul spat out that last sentence, and and his eyes turned to the bow.

In the forward part of the chamber, Bec saw the wheel of a Changer—a weapon of such deadliness that its existence within the Cities was forbidden. Bec was suddenly stern, for such things were within the scope of his duties. "That is not permitted," he asserted coldly.

"The school exists alone!" Kul retorted. And Bec was baffled, for the school was autonomous and not subject to regular civil authority.

"You intend to kill," Bec accused.

"...exterminate!" The word was supercharged with hate.

BEC SAID no more. He was confronted with a fearful dilemma. As a monitor of civil-safety, his duty was to safeguard the security of the people; but he could not discern the path of safety in this situation. Undoubtedly, the upper level creatures had been aroused by the spheroid's intrusion—and the destruction of that vessel had left no uncertainty for Kul as to their nature. There was no assurance that those things could not descend to the Cities, and Bec had to decide on the best method to prevent such a penetration. Would a deadly attack, such as Kul evidently planned, frighten the creatures so that they would not venture downward—or would it merely inflame their viciousness and so precipitate an invasion of the lower levels?

Left undisturbed, the things might forget the incident of the spheroid—or they might plan a downward ex-

ploration, encouraged by the lack of retaliation. The use of force could produce no predictable result, and a policy of no-action was equally uncertain. A decision was impossible now; Bec could only wait for a more opportune moment. He knew that he had to curb Kul's murderous hate as best he could; but, even in this matter, he had to act cautiously. If he openly opposed Kul's plan, there would be a struggle for control of the dis-ship—and Kul was the only one thoroughly familiar with the operation of this new vessel.

The dis-ship continued on its swift, upward course, and they were now approaching the sixth level. The new course had carried them away from the deadly slopes of Tolaan, but the distant bulk of the mountain was always within sight, a titanic shadow that forever rose above them. The scene was eerie and wonderful to Bec. Amazed, he viewed the horde of unknown, fantastic creatures that inhabited this level.

Like Tolaan, life did not seem to have an upper limit. The thought that they were the first to explore this area since the Beginning thrilled Bec, but Kul was unmoved. The scientist's perception had shrunk to a tiny region that encompassed the controls and the detectors; all else was thrust from his mind.

The passing of another swarm of creatures reminded Bec that the plasticity and transparency of first-level life was lacking here. The normal shape was long and slender, and the body was of a peculiar density—with strange, symmetrical markings. This upper-level life seemed comparatively sedate and leisurely. Bec could see few signs of the insensate ferocity of beasts of the first level. The only exception to this rule of first-level existence was Bec's people, who had risen above the brutish roles of killers and the slain. Although they possessed the fierce, questing strength of their savage ancestors, his people did not need

to hunt and kill; wisdom enabled them to draw their life from the land.

The dis-ship continued to rise at an incredible rate, and the mystery of the eighth level enveloped them now. Bec mentally recorded the stunning vistas of unknown life as best he could; but he did not have a scientist's training to help him distinguish between the significant and the irrelevant. Outside pressure had fallen to less than one-fifth of normal, and a tremendous force was exerted on the hull by internal pressure. A mist of glowing strain-dots swirled within the curved walls of the control-room and Bec knew that, as they went higher, the dots would expand and merge to form a web of luminous lines. When that happened, the explosion of the hull—and the end of their lives—would not be long delayed. To add to the danger, the exterior temperature had been rising; and this inexplicable heat was slowly weakening the hull.

Most mysterious of all was the appearance of radiation, after they had entered the ninth level. The source of the rays seemed to be far above them, and Bec was utterly bewildered—such radiation was only emitted by melters. Could there be a space of melting gas beyond the discontinuity? The thought was staggering.

For an instant, Bec believed that the rays came from Tolaan's crest; but he realized his error when he noted that the radiation was uniform in all directions. Bec placed filters over the ports to reduce the intensity of the radiation. With observation made less painful, he was able to examine the distant crags of Tolaan, and he was thunderstruck to see plants of inconceivable shapes and hues. The old legends of Tolaan the Lifeless were shattered. Here on the highest slopes of the killer mountain was the source of that debris from which their food-plants had first been bred countless generations ago. So great was his amazement that he did not notice immediately that the blades had stopped.

AT LAST, Bec looked away from the mountain. The heat within the vessel was a torture; and, despite the vapor-exchangers, the bare portions of the hull could not be touched. An expanse of threatening strain-dots and lines gleamed within the metal; they could not rise much farther. These things Bec noticed almost automatically, but his attention was caught and held by Kul's new attitude. The hate-filled, fuming avenger was gone; there was an aura of complete calm about Kul. He seemed the master scientist once more. And, "equally startling. Bec's detectors blinked a warning to him of a strange object ahead and above.

"Why did you stop the blades?" Bec asked.

"They can detect the blades; my comrades were not attacked until they applied power," Kul explained.

"Are you certain that this object is the destroyer of the spheroid?" demanded Bec.

"This is the exact area of that attack, and the indications given by the detectors are similar to those reported by the spheroid," Kul asserted.

"And do you still hate?"

"I know; my actions have been strange. Yes, my hate is still alive but thought, not emotion, rules me now. My friends were murdered; a project of many generations was blasted. I hunger for revenge but I will not lose control.

"I fear for our people, for we face enemies far more deadly than any beasts. They are not senseless creatures, cruel by instinct; these things are intelligent and they have perverted their knowledge. They use their minds and skills to destroy. I think they are mad. Now that we have located the killer-thing, we can secure data to help us protect our land...and we can destroy some of those things." Kul expressed that last thought with appalling joy.

Bec was dismayed. He respected Kul's genius, and was convinced of the great danger that threatened the Cities.

And he also feared Kul. "Why will they be destroyed?"

"They will attack; it is their nature," Kul stated flatly.

Bec now had no doubts that Kul intended to provoke an attack, in order to make his vengeance certain. Probably Kul had convinced himself that this was a selfless adventure—for the sake of his people. Bec knew the demands of his duty, and he was forced to a dangerous course of action. "You are tampering with the safety of our people," accused Bec. "In this matter, the duty and the responsibility are mine; I ask you to submit to my orders."

Kul was startled and angered. "No! Your authority does not extend here."

"At this moment, I am the people," answered Bec. "Yield or I will smash the Changer; do you want to meet those things unarmed?"

There was a menacing pause while Kul, speechless with rage, gauged Bec's determination. No sign of hesitation or fear was visible in the monitor's appearance. Kul reluctantly admitted defeat.

"Your duty..." the scientist snapped. "I will submit."

TENSION released its grip on Bec.

Although the unsettling effect of Kul's hate could only be guessed at, Bec had had to force the issue. His duty demanded that he secure accurate information on the destroyers of the spheroid and deliver that data to the Cities. On those points, Kul could not be trusted.

"Lower the internal pressure," Bec ordered, "and continue the ascent." The pistons were retracted slightly and Bec was momentarily nauseated by the drop in pressure. The dis-ship rose past the halfway mark of the ninth level, but the hull showed only a minor additional strain because of the decreased internal pressure. Bec studied his detectors to learn that the object was just above their height, and was moving rapidly at a constant altitude. Bec went forward and pre-

pared the Changer for discharge. A faint, grey speck appeared far ahead; it was the object of this epochal voyage.

"Stabilize the ship." Bec was ready to carry out his test.

A skillful adjustment of valves gradually halted the dis-ship on its upward course. Kul also sighted the object, and his exclamations vibrated with a murderous delight. The thing was amazingly small and slim. Bec thought it might be some odd-shaped creature, until he spied something familiar on one end of the thing...tiny blades. That was the clue that this was indeed some eerie product of intelligences never before known. The utter rigidity of the little grey thing provided a final proof that it was a machine. The thing was at their height, but it was moving past the dis-ship at a considerable distance.

"Start the blades in neutral pitch." Bec watched Kul for a sign of defiance; the sonorous rhythm of the blades rose to full volume. Bec turned to the forward ports. What would be the reaction of those things...fear, indifference, or curiosity? By holding the dis-ship stationary, Bec eliminated the possibility that movement of their vessel might be mistakenly interpreted as fearful or hostile. The grey object began to turn sharply toward them, and a tiny sliver shot from its forward part amid the turmoil of a gas discharge.

Kul's warning exploded in his mind. "The killing thing...it smashed the spheroid...they reported it before..."

Bec's lunge threw Kul away from the controls before the scientist could set the ship in motion. Bec had to make a complete test, even at the risk of their lives. He was at the Changer in an instant, and released a wide-angle, short-lived discharge. A mist of golden sparks streaked outward and enveloped the onrushing speck. The little sliver wavered, then vanished in a burst of the glaring radiance of a melter. The dis-ship trembled under

the impact of a violent shock; Bec was sickened with horror, for the attack had been terribly prompt. Such swiftness could be explained only by instinctive action, not by an exercise of reason. Kul anticipated Bec and stopped the blades.

But the killer pressed the assault and a barrage of shrill pulses burst from the grey thing. Maddening sound waves impinged on the hull.

"...artificial...mechanically produced..." Kul suggested.

Another sliver darted toward them. Kul seemed stunned by this stark ferocity.

Bec released a maximum charge. "Down at full power!"

The renewed song of the blades deepened to a change in pitch. Exterior valves snapped open, and the ship leaped ahead and downward with a wrenching acceleration. Another flash marked the end of the second dart. Bec had a last glimpse of the killer-thing before it vanished in the upper distances. The Changer had started its frightful work, and the surface of the thing was being dissolved by red excrescences. Fiery gases spurted from within; it was slowly drifting downward, out of control.

In the end, all things hinged on Tolaan. The last sight of that murderous thing told Bec that the wreckage would come to rest among the unknown rocks of Tolaan's highest slopes. The mystery of Tolaan had beckoned his people upward into a fantastic realm, and now that forbidding peak would be the guardian of yet another enigma.

"I must tender an apology," Kul began; "I should not have opposed you. A scientist should not participate in determining the truth of that which is most important to him. I should have known that better than any other, for I permitted my friends to ascend and test my discontinuity theory."

Bec's respect for the scientist was restored in that moment. To see and

admit an error is surely a mark of a rational mind.

Bearing tidings of death, they had begun the long journey downward to the Cities.

Headquarters
Sixth Allied Fleet

South Atlantic Force

Brazil submarine *Parana* lost 15° 55' 26" S 5° 52' 30" W at 10:32 hours this date due to hostile action. Report of prior unverified contact by *Parana* to follow.

Anderson, R. L., Captain, USS *Norwood*



Readin' and Writin'

Book Reviews by Damon Knight and the Editor

WHO GOES THERE? by John W. Campbell Jr. Shasta, 1951; 230 pp., \$3.00.

In the pantheon of magazine science fiction there is no taller figure—and certainly none odder—than that of John Campbell. Under his own name, beginning as an MIT student in the thirties, he wrote gadgety, fast-moving, cosmic-scaled science fiction in the E. E. Smith tradition and became, after Smith himself, its acknowledged master; as "Don A. Stuart", he began a one-man literary revival which eventually made that tradition obsolete. As editor of *Astounding*, he forced the magazine through a series of metamorphoses, not the least startling of which has been the evolution of its title—from *ASTOUNDING Stories* to *ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION*. More clearly than anyone, Campbell foresaw that the field was growing up, and would only be handicapped by the symbols of its pulpwood infancy; he deliberately built up a readership among practicing scientists and technicians; he made himself the apostle of genuine science in science fiction... and ended as a whole-hearted convert to Dianetics.

As an editor, Campbell has never forgotten that, like a nation or an organism, the magazine which does not grow and change must wither. There have been periods, long enough to try the soul of the most faithful

reader, when *Astounding* seemed to be dying on the vine; but always, up to now, it has turned out that Campbell was only incubating a new avatar.

In a hasty, ill-composed and ill-considered introduction, Campbell says of the first Don A. Stuart story, "Twilight", that "it was entirely different from any science fiction that had appeared before." He ought to have added, "in Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*, or any of its successors"; so qualified, the statement would have fallen at least somewhere near the truth. "Twilight" is what Campbell says it is, a pure mood story—and as such is the lineal descendant of H. G. Wells, "The Time Machine", Rudyard Kipling's "A Matter of Fact" (both circa 1890), Stephen Vincent Benet's "By the Waters of Babylon", and many others. By the late thirties, when, after a long decline, the oldest magazine in the field had already died and been reincarnated as a dung-beetle, magazine science-fiction was fast settling toward a dismal status as just another variety of pulp; Campbell's great achievement was to rescue it from its own overspecialized preoccupations and start it back toward the mainstream of literature. Although he later tried to nudge it the other way, the movement has continued under guidance as capable as Campbell's; the revolution is a success.

Campbell, a capable writer, never

has been a stylist, and he didn't alter his natural prose style, with its short, blurted, agrammatical sentences, for the purpose of creating "Don A. Stuart". What makes the difference is partly the tone—a kind of high-pitched singsong—and partly the point of view, a subtle thing that resists exact definition. The visual quality of every writer's work differs at least slightly from every other's; probably it also differs, at least as widely, between one reader and the next. If I say then, that the Don A. Stuart quality, to me, is like a series of images shifting in and out of focus through a pearl-grey haze, nobody else is likely to sit up and shout, "That's exactly it," least of all the author. Readers who aren't visually oriented will not even know what I'm talking about. But the quality does exist and, I should think, is capable of being detected in some form by almost everybody; it's an important factor in making these seven stories what they are.

In "Twilight" and its sequel "Night", two wistful, nostalgic stories about the decline and fall of the human race; in "Who Goes There?", the unforgettable story of thirty seven men trapped in an Antarctic camp with a monster who may have assumed the shape of any of them; and perhaps most of all in "Dead Knowledge", with its huge, alien necropolis and its puzzle locked in cursive, many-dotted writing that no one can ever read, the quality is enormously effective; in the others, a little less so. The remaining three are all gadget-based stories; "Blindness", in addition, is a wry character-study of a scientist whose life work is rendered useless by one of his own minor discoveries; "Frictional Losses" is a routine man-vs.-conquering-monsters story; "Elimination" is an ironic treatment of the prophecy theme.

SPACE ON MY HANDS, by Fredric Brown. Shasta, 1951; 224 pp., \$2.50.

Fred Brown, science fiction's mid-

dle-aged pixie, is a quiet, wry little man whose wary expression suggests that he's continually on guard against fresh buffets from Fate...or, at any rate, bad smells. His prose artistry; his irreverent sense of humor; and the astonishing, damned-up flood of love for the human race that releases itself in his work, have made him one of the most rewarding fantasy writers alive. The devil of it is that he's even better—and is paid more—as a detective-fiction writer: his first mystery novel, "The Fabulous Clipjoint", won the MWA "Edgar" in 1947; since then something like ten more have gone with monotonous regularity through trade editions to Bantam Books reprintings. As an inevitable consequence; except for a handful of collaborations turned out by the now-disbanded Taos gang, it's been a frightening number of years since Brown has had any fantasy published at all.

Here, anyhow, are nine stories, originally published (most of them in *Thrilling Wonder* and *Startling*) between 1943 and 1949. Three of them—"Knock", "The Star Mouse", and the long novelette "Come and Go Mad"—are first-rate Brown, than which there is nothing better. Five more, starting with the outrageous "Pi in the Sky", range from lesser masterpieces to readable pot-boilers; and one, "Crisis in 1999", is almost as bad as its *Tales of Tomorrow* telecast version—which was very bad indeed.

**MY JOURNEYS WITH ASTAR-
GO**, by Perl T. Barnhouse. Bell Publications, Denver, 1952; 212 pp., paperbound, no price listed anywhere.

Here's a real curiosity—a primitive science fiction novel, whose plot in several ways strikingly resembles that of "The Skylark of Space".

Unlike Dr. Smith's Richard Seat-on—who found his motive power by accident, and financed the building of his spaceship simply by being pals with a multi millionaire—Jack McCune and his sidekick Clif Sumner

earn what they get the hard way; the first 28 pages of the book are taken up with preliminaries.

McCune and Sumner—both cowboys and Army veterans—have, as the author puts it, both been bitten by the same bug—"cosmic energy". Meeting again after the war, they decide to team up in pursuit of this mathematical will-o'-the-wisp; later on they enlist a third partner, a Southern youth named Albert Stardorf, Star for short. Living on McCune's ranch at first, later working a mine acquired by McCune in an odd but perfectly plausible fashion, they acquire the knowledge and the capital they need; this takes them two years. Then there's the matter of certain minerals essential to the process; the world-wide hunt for these consumes seven years more—and finally, something like twelve years from the starting line, they're ready to begin building a spaceship.

The ship, like the *Skylark*, is spherical and is propelled by anti-gravity. Its construction is described with considerable precision, and includes solutions of several engineering problems which, to the best of my recollection, Dr. Smith overlooked. When it's built, the trio—with a carefully-winnowed crew—make a trial-flight to Mars via the Moon. (Mars, they find, has unpleasant weather but is well-populated; there are "rank tasting animals that must have degenerated from a cross of goat and camel, a kind of cony...a fleet but pugnacious swinelike beast...mice...jackals, bobtailed weasels...water insects, toads, and...wild ducks....") They then decide to head for Sirius.

It takes them nine years to get there; when they do, they discover an Earthlike planet; land; and—again like Dr. Smith's voyagers—open communications with the inhabitants by means of a telepathic instrument, a "mentagraph". This was a local invention in "The Skylark of Space", but the Astargonauts brought it with them; where they got it, I'm unable

to discover. At any rate the planet—whose name is Garza—turns out to be unequally divided between two nations—the Ruzos and (surprise!) the outnumbered Amacans. The Ruzos, under a ruthless leader named (surprise!) Stalo, have a People's Republic, in which the proletariat has had its wits liquidated and its hide covered with fur in order to save expense and trouble; the Amacans are democratic and much nicer, but our friends don't discover this until they've spent some months in Ruzo. McCune, who must be nudging fifty by now, has undergone the Ruzonian rejuvenation and longevity treatment. Then, diplomatic relations becoming strained, they flee to Amaca and—again as in "The Skylark of Space"—aid in the overthrow of Ruzo and are repaid by the grateful Amacans with a bigger and better replica of their spaceship. This second ship is *Astargo*, the first having been christened *Pioneerer*; the genesis of the new name had better be explained in the author's words:

...we had named (the ship) by combining part of the word astral and argo, Jason's ship. Then too, the three syllables of the name, A-star-go, fitted the purpose of the ship pretty nicely.

...Anyhow, while *Astargo* is still abuilding, McCune becomes enamoured of the Emperor's daughter Maysel (Amaco, as I say, is a democracy; but the people have elected a temporary emperor, Roman-fashion, to deal with the threat of Ruzo) who, it turns out, has been promised in marriage to a stinker named Mertos. Mertos is blackmailing Maysel's old man by threatening to reveal some indiscretion committed in his gay-dog youth. While McCune is trying to persuade the Emperor to face the music, Mertos—still again as in "The Skylark of Space," but about thirty chapters later—makes off with Maysel, and McCune is obliged to fly to the rescue.

Following this, the new ship is stocked and commissioned; McCune and Maysel are married, (every other member of the ship's complement having already acquired a Garzan bride) rejuvenation treatments are handed out all around; and after another nine* or ten-year journey, during which Maysel and most of the other brides become mothers, the augmented crew finds itself on another Earthlike planet, which they christen Earthonia.

ANOTHER six years, another star. On the way, McCune is tempted into dalliance with somebody else's wife, but his conscience asserts itself at the crucial instant; this is a disappointment in a way, but refreshing all the same—it's the sort of thing that never would have occurred to Seaton for three zillionths of a millimicrosecond.

The new planet, Perfecto, looks so good to the travelers that they elect to stay and build a permanent, self-sufficient settlement. With rare good sense, Barnhouse doesn't minimize the difficulties of this undertaking—four years go by before they're ready to build so much as a house, and six more before the colony can get along without supplies from the ship. Finally, twenty-seven years after the landing, the McCunes and seventeen other couples again take off in *Astargo*, this time heading homeward. Stopping off briefly at four solar systems on the way, they reach Earth approximately one hundred and fifty years after the maiden flight of the *Pioneer*—only to discover that, like Garza, Earth has become a communist world-state. (They arrive in the year 2045, which, unless Mr. Barnhouse and I use different systems of subtraction, must mean they left circa 1895—in which case, among other difficulties, it's hard to say what American war McCune and Sumner could have been in.) This problem is short work for the Astargonauts, and would have been even shorter except for a curious lapse of judgement on McCune's part:

repairing the ship on Mars after a disastrous and unnesessary shellacking, they return and bomb the living blazes out of Moscow, Prague, Budapest, Berlin, London, Ottawa, Washington, Honolulu, Tokyo and Peking. What's left of the world capitulates promptly and democracy is restored; but McCune & Co., finding that no trace remains of any of their families, decide to return to Perfecto, this time for good.

"My Journeys With Astargo", as the reader may have inferred, has numerous faults; but it has a good many virtues, too. McCune's story, told by himself—and unpolished by anyone with more knowledge of grammar—is good-humored and zestful. When he's writing about cattle-ranching, mining or structural-engineering, he's clearly on familiar ground, and expresses himself well and concisely; and even when he touches on more abstruse subjects with which, equally clearly, he has no acquaintance, the gorgeous stews of five-dollar words he concocts are worth cherishing for their own sake.

Judging by the look of it, this volume was manufactured by a medium-sized job-printing concern, possibly at the author's expense; presumably the novel was previously submitted to trade publishers, and presumably it was rejected—but I must admit I can't see why. In style and plot it is no worse than, say, "When Worlds Collide"; and compared with "The Blind Spot", it is as Shakespeare to Mickey Spillane.

—Damon Knight

STAR SCIENCE FICTION
STORIES, Fifteen completely new stories, never before published; edited by Frederik Pohl. Ballantine Books, 1953; hard-bound edition \$1.50; paper-bound edition, 35¢.

Contents: "Country Doctor", by William Morrison; "Dominoes", by C. M. Kornbluth; "Idealist", by

Lester del Rey; "The Night He Cried", by Fritz Leiber; "Contraption", by Clifford D. Simak; "The Chronoclasm", by John Wyndham; "The Deserter", by William Tenn; "The Man With English", by H. L. Gold; "So Proudly We Hail", by Judith Merrill; "A Scent of Sarsaparilla", by Ray Bradbury; "Nobbody Here But—", by Isaac Asimov; "The Last Weapon", by Robert Sheckley; "A Wild Surmise", by Henry Kuttner & C. L. Moore; "The Journey", by Murray Leinster; and, "The Nine Billion Names of God", by Arthur C. Clarke.

This is not the usual type of anthology; what we have here is a representative sample of just about every type of science-fiction writing, and every separate attitude toward science-fiction, that is to be found on the contemporary scene. The odds are that no one (except that rare person who enjoys *everything* labelled "science fiction") is going to like *all* the stories in this volume; but, whether you like a given tale or not, you will find it no less than competent in story-line and writing—and you'll find a number that are considerably more than just good.

Morrison offers a very fine example of what I would call the "straight" science fiction yarn—a fascinating scientific problem, not cluttered with abstruse gimmicks or technology, combined with an equally-fascinating human situation. Kornbluth presents the hard-boiled approach, but not overdone, with a "trip to the future for a valuable tip" theme. del Rey and Tenn give their own versions of the ethical problem story, the latter satirical, where the former is straight. (And in both instances, I felt that the story could have been done better, and that the author himself was the one to do it better after a cooling-off period.) Leiber presents a delightful burlesque of the Mickey Spillane school, which has invaded science-fiction of late; while Simak offers a "child" story, which some will find moving, but

which also struck me as being heavy-handed. Wyndham represents the intellectual and literary approach, which manages to maintain a light touch, and is all the more effective for it; Gold goes in for more of the belly-laugh type of humor, and his story will be more appreciated by those who have not read Lemkin's "A Matter of Nerves" (June, 1932 *Amazing Stories*) and Dr. Coole's, "A Surgical Error" (*Astounding Stories*, November, 1937)—in short, to those readers to whom this will look like a new idea.

Judith Merrill presents the "woman's slick" treatment to science fiction (and, it should be noted, without many of the inane tabus one finds in that medium), while those who consider Bradbury's nostalgia for 1910, and thereabouts, to be in the science-fiction orbit, will enjoy his tale. (I don't, and didn't.) Asimov gives forth a lighthearted (but not completely so; there are deeper undertones here) account of man versus thinking-machine; Sheckley has a facile, but enjoyable biter-bit tale, and the Kuttners combine with a somewhat delirious but completely enjoyable takeoff on psychiatry, human and inhuman. Leinster's slice of people "as real as you and I", I found tedious, but can't condemn it—it's part of the plenum, and better done than many other specimens, Lord knows. And, speaking of the Lord, Arthur C. Clarke has examined theology on a scientific basis in his "Billion Names of God", with frightening, but stimulating results.

All in all, "Star Science Fiction Stories" is a bargain at either price, and you'll find here a selection which could not have been found in any single issue of any magazine I know of; I think any of my colleagues would have loved to have some of the stories, and would have cheerfully bounced others, as I would have myself. But don't let this snide remark deter you from purchasing the volume; you'll get your money's worth, decidedly!

—Robert W. Lowndes

JUDAS OF THE SPACEWAYS

by Walter Kubiilus

A collaborator should remember that he's expendable . . .

SPACE IS lonely. Space is filled with long, weary years between the stars, in which there is nothing to do; nothing to talk about; nothing to think of—but the weird sagas of spaceflight, and the strange life-forms of other worlds.

The six prospectors, and the sole occupant of the odd ship which had rescued them, were gathered around in a semi-circle beneath the crystal window that showed them the broad sweep of stars in their galaxy.

"The *Judas* ship," McHugh said; "if you don't mind my saying it, that's a helluva name for a spaceship."

Gary, who had noticed their bleak distress-signal when he landed to place flowers upon the five graves, smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"Another thing," McHugh said slowly, shifting his belt so that the blaster-handle rested near his palm. "Remember the *Orion* crash survivors? They radioed that a ship named *Judas* was about to rescue them—and nobody heard of them again. The same happened with the Centaurian exploration-body."

Gary looked into McHugh's eyes and said, "Do you know?"

The blaster slipped out of the belt, and McHugh raised its pointed nose toward the old man's heart. The other prospectors ranged on one side with him, against the sole owner and skipper of the *Judas*. "I know enough to

(illustrated by Tom Beecham)



Three Cygnians confronted them.

smell something that's more rotten than *kava de Mercurio*," McHugh said grimly. "You saved our lives on that sterile hunk of metal but we had no choice. We've heard about you before—the *Judas* ship which rescues lost prospectors and crash survivors, yet has never been known to land in a civilized port!

"I watched you work that control panel, and I didn't graduate a fourth mate for nothing. It's a complete phoney. The gauges are fakes; there's no connection between the levers and actual operating mechanism. When you were asleep, I unlocked the controls and experimented with the ship. Then I went down to the rear of the *Judas* for a look at the engines."

Gary's smile was cold; but there was also a sadness in his eyes, as if this scene had happened many, many times before. "What did you find?"

"No engines! There's not a single jet running this ship! I found another set of controls—the real ones—under that phoney panel. I worked them and I learned how to operate the *Judas*. It's anti-grav!"

Strode, Hayden, and the other prospectors with McHugh, gasped. For a hundred years, ever since the first rocket crashed upon the Moon, Earth scientists had searched desperately for some method of using gravitational force itself to propel rockets, thus conserving the enormous energy required for interplanetary and interstellar travel. The man, nation, or planet with anti-grav could control the universe. The cold war with Cygnus could be settled once and for all.

"What do you want?" Gary asked.

"The truth," McHugh said. "Whose ship is this? How did you get it? What's behind all these rumors of the *Judas* ship picking up lost groups like us, and then destroying them? Each of us is armed; you are not. Talk or we'll kill you."

GARY LOOKED at them. There were six. Curious that there were always six. He glanced at McHugh,

then Strode, Vincent, Gorham, Hayden, and Seagar. All of them were young; all were strong. Which one of them would it be? His mind sped back thirty years.

"I fought in the Cygnian War," he said, beginning the same story that he had told so often; "that was about three decades ago. Our Fourth-Sector Fleet met an outpost of the Cygnian line in the region of this very star. It wasn't much of a battle—only two or three ships disintegrated, and I don't suppose it's listed in the major war screen-reviews. But for me, Commander Allen, and Dr. Munson, it was the most important battle in the history of the Solar System. For it was on this occasion that we met—that we met the *Judas* of the Spaceways. Only . . . at that time, she had no name; it was only some years later that I painted the black letters on her evil prow."

The magic of the spaceman's saga crept over them, and even McHugh let drop the blaster as they listened. Thirty years were drawn aside and they lived again a minor, unimportant episode in the Cygnian War that occurred near the sterile planetoid that encircled a small dying yellow sun.

Ribbons of debris stretched spaceward beyond the disintegrating battlespheres; the mangled bodies of Earthmen and Cygnians now drifted about through the void, with no restrictions on the basis of species or planetary origin. Twisted girders and useless armament began to drift in their perpetual orbits through the black heavens, around the pale yellow sun and its single, lifeless planet.

The three survivors piled out of the crushed lifeball, and ran with chattering teeth and ice-pierced lungs toward the strange oval-shaped vessel on the horizon.

"Definitely not an Earth-ship," senior officer Allen muttered, as he slowed down to ease his pounding heart. "There's nothing like it illustrated in Jane's 'Fighting Spacecraft'."

"Damn the fleet for running off and leaving us," young Gary said, shaking his fist at the star-filled sky, forgetting the presence of the senior officer and the physician who outranked him. "Damn the whole rotten Earth and its filthy human race, always murdering, always killing..."

Allen's fist lashed out; the blow struck hard, sending an agonizing wave of pain through the Cadet. "Shut up," Allen said. "We're in a tight spot, but we'll get through to give those Cygnians a beating."

Gary was silent, but his eyes blazed hatred for Allen and the whole Earth policy of interstellar conquest. He was sick of the war, sick of constant struggle. Someday he was going to get revenge upon his brother-Earthmen who had taken him away from the pleasant solace of his books and put him in uniform behind a space artillery blaster. The hatred smoldered.

Munson was the first to cross the high ridge that cut across the planetoid's single, great valley. He stopped suddenly, raising his hand to warn the others. The gesture came too late, for Gary and Allen hopped beside him and found themselves exposed to the three Cygnians. The bark-covered torsos of the aliens wavered uncertainly as they turned their brown, eye-tipped branches first at the three Earthmen, and then around to the strange vessel a few yards in back of their own wrecked lifeball.

"Do not shoot," the first Cygnian said, its stalk-like strands twisting frantically in the effort to simulate human speech. "We are not armed."

"Your surrender is accepted; I am Captain Allen, Spaceship Albert, 4th Sector." His teeth chattered in the cold.

crash. Their leader, who seemed more skilled in voice-simulation, hobbled forward, five of his eye-branches upon the Earthmen, and the other five directed at the inert spaceship not far behind them. Its porthole door loomed invitingly.

"You misunderstand," it said, the high-pitched words shooting out of the temporary vocal cords. "We notice that you are also unarmed. Our surrender will be only to the men and officers of your new-model vessel there. Strange that we did not see it when our fleets first met in battle."

"But that's not our—" Gary said.

"Shut up!" Allen said.

"Thank you for the slip; so it is not an Earth ship, after all for it lacks jet tubes. For a moment, we feared that Earth had discovered anti-gravity propulsion; happily that is not so. The ship must therefore be an extra-galactic visitor, for no Cygnian photo-records list any such craft."

Allen began to walk down the ridge. The Cygnian took a step forward and screeched a warning. "Stand! Where are you attempting to pass?"

"To that vessel. You know that we cannot survive long in this frigid atmosphere. Our lifeball is wrecked, and so is yours; we'll freeze to death unless we get shelter in that ship, extra-galactic or not."

"Stop! The Code of War—"

"Forget the damm code!" Gary shouted, slapping his arms to his sides in a futile effort to keep warm. "The war's over as far as we're concerned for both fleets are gone for good. How about a truce?"

Allen walked back, "I'll talk of truce here! By my honor if you ever get back to Earth, I'll break you so low—"

"If we get back," Munson interrupted hurriedly, trying to avoid an open quarrel in the face of the enemy. Gary glared at them both.

The Cygnians seemed to consult among themselves, their branch-eyes huddling, and then turning from the Earthmen to the unknown ship. The first one spoke, his thready cords crack-

THE CYGNIANS appeared to have recovered from the shock of their

ling in the cold, "It is agreed; truce until one side or the other gets a military advantage. I am Michener Zero, and these are my brother warriors, Six Plus One, and Hull Forty."

"Truce agreed," Allen said, raising his right hand in the universal symbol of peaceful intention, and then whispered to Gary and Munson. "Don't trust them a second; stick together, keep your eyes open. There's still a war on."

The six of them ran through the freezing cold to the open door of the unidentified vessel.

When they had all entered, Gary shut the door behind them. This seemed to activate the spaceship's mechanism, for the walls began to glow and currents of warm air flowed around the six.

THE SHIP was not compartmentalized, except for food-storage vaults, for the control-cabin took up most of the space. It was a bright, clear room, with huge crystal windows curving around a control-panel that must have served to operate the ship. There was no furniture save for a round table that seemed to be built into the framework of the ship, so that it could not be moved. Six cubicles—almost like huge coffins—formed a great half-circle around the central table. Each was occupied by a dead body. Michener Zero reached with an exploratory branch and touched one of the corpses, gingerly; it collapsed, sending a rising cloud of dust into the air.

"Carbon-base organism," he said, stepping backward with the others, and then asked for corroboration. "Not from any of our worlds. Perhaps yours?"

"This is your specialty, Doc," Allen said, as he looked away. Munson bent over another one of the bodies, which also turned to dust.

"Several hundred or even thousands of years old," he said; "bone-structure, what's left of it, completely alien."

"What killed them?" Gary asked,

looking uneasily at the bare walls and the complete lack of furniture or other artifacts.

"No weapons visible anywhere," Six Plus One said in the high-pitched strains of a Cygnian unused to voice-mimicry.

"My guess is starvation," Munson said, passing from body to body. "Notice the size of the belts and notches; these bodies were about one-fifth of their normal size before death took them and decomposition began."

"Premise mistaken," Hull Forty called out from the far end of the room. "Chambers in rear of vessel filled with food concentrates."

"Might have been poisoned," Munson suggested.

"Most remarkable vessel," Hull Forty said, approaching them with lumps of what seemed to be very heavy bread. "Edible. Apparently synthetic, but not at all monotonous in taste. Cygnian digestive system highly sensitive; can detect and identify any substance. Food definitely not poisoned."

Gary and Munson tasted some of the lumps, experimentally. "I'll be damned," Munson said. "I thought of steak and it began to taste just like steak; then I thought of potatoes—and potatoes it was!"

"At least we won't starve on this trip," Allen murmured, reaching for a handful. "But that's not solving our main problem—how to get back to Earth lines."

"Correction," Michener Zero said.

"Truce, that's right," Allen agreed hurriedly; "we'll talk about it later."



That night they did talk about it, for what seemed to be endless hours of maneuvering. Physically, the Earthmen and Cygnians were fairly matched; any struggle was bound to end with both combatants dead, or hopelessly maimed. There was no agreement between the two groups, and

neither dared trust the other. Only in the minute examination of the control-board, and in the effort to master the operation of the ship, was there any cooperation.

ALLEN AND Michener Zero spent the next day at the control-panels, while the others lazed, or slept in the cubicles they had cleared out for themselves.

When they gathered around the table for the mid-day meal Allen told them that the system of propulsion had been mastered.

"As far as we understand it," he said, "there's an anti-gravity plate built into the walls of this ship. Motion in any set direction is produced by causing a negative reaction in the proper portion of the wall-plate. We haven't the faintest idea where the power comes from, but Michener and I tried it and we've raised this ship one mile above the planet—so gently that none of you even noticed it!"

They rushed to the port-windows and looked out. The planetoid was beneath them, long black shadows running down from the ridge across the desert-like valley floor. There was no motion and no blast from roaring rockets.

"Will it work through interstellar space?" Munson asked.

"Why not?" Allen said. "What do we have to lose? There's food enough for a few years; the question is—where do we go?"

"Cygnus," Michener Zero said, promptly. "We claim the vessel by right of prior discovery and recognition of its extra-galactic origin."

"If this ship," Allen said, "gets to Cygnus and they master its anti-gravity principle, they'll be able to build a fleet which can vanquish anything the Earth can produce."

"Correct," Hull Forty agreed, his cords trembling violently; "for that reason, we will fight to death rather than permit any Earthmen to capture this ship."

Stalemate.

Gary turned away in disgust. There would be no effort to probe the origin of the ship, or the fate of the six bodies they had found in the cubicles. Nothing interested the men of Earth and Cygnus but the ship's potential for war. If Gary were master of the ship, he would give it to neither side; anti-gravity would only make for larger, and more destructive, interstellar and even intergalactic war. Instead he would roam the spaceways in splendid isolation.

He sensed a community with the ship. It, like himself, was an outcast forever... alone. Like some Judas, despised and held in contempt, it was nevertheless used, bought, and sold.

"Let us wait," Munson said slowly, trying to ease the tension that had suddenly arisen. "Perhaps we can work out some sort of compromise, in which both Earth and Cygnus get this anti-gravity principle—or perhaps, neither."

"Compromise?" Michener Zero asked, through taut strands. "With an Earthman? We have fought you for a century, and know that you cannot be trusted."

"There's still a truce," Gary said, returning to the group, and wondering whether, in the final battle, his opponent would be Hull Forty, or Six Plus One. "Let us head for some neutral planetary system halfway between Sol and Cygnus."

"Suppose we approach one of the fleets?" Hull Forty asked.

"We'll surrender to whichever one it is," Allen urged, with a promptness that indicated he had no intention of doing any such thing. "Since there is no armament here, struggle would be useless."

"The compromise," Michener Zero decided, "is reasonable."

THEY SET the prow for the neutral star, and raised the ship. It rose slowly, without the blast of acceleration that often killed the strongest of

men, and then leveled off with the yellow sun directly behind.

During sleep-period, Gary and Munson occupied two of the cubicles on one side, while Six Plus One and Hull Forty rested in the other. Michener Zero and Allen stood guard over them, and on each other. Both waited for the incident which would bring the struggle to the climax, so that the ship would become the permanent possession of one side or the other.

There was little sleep for Allen and Munson, whose eyes were constantly open for treachery from the Cygnians. Only Gary rested, and his thoughts were always on the ship. In his mind he had already given it the name of Judas.

Ah, Judas, if you and I could be free of these two groups, the universe would be ours. I would take you through the spacelanes and protect you from the guns of the warring fleets. Dreamily, he kept on thinking: you know what will happen when either the Earth or Cygnian fleet captures you. They will take you to the Space Yard, and there you will be dismantled—piece by piece—until you are dead.

His mind sped on, taking the thought and carrying it onward. He fought sleep, but it dragged him down into a whirlpool of ideas and then the fragment of a concept struck him violently.

Hours later, after the long voiceless screams and the agony of trying to move even one finger of his paralyzed body, Gary heard the clear imprint of a thought in his mind.

—Be still, Gary. I am Hull Forty. Can you understand me?—

—Traitor!—Gary thought—Let me out of this paralysis! What sort of poison did you use? I cannot move.

—No poison—Hull Forty answered—If it is any consolation to you, I am as much paralyzed as you. I cannot move a single branch, or open one eyebud. For a while, I thought you

Earthmen had outwitted us, and that this paralysis was but some sort of near-death. Only when I began to get your own frantic thoughts did I realize that you and I are in the same difficulty—

—We never knew that you Cygnians are telepathic—

—We are not. This is a new experience. We seem to be communicating through some other medium whose nature I cannot understand. You seem excited. What is happening?—

—Munson shook me, trying to awaken me. I think he has called Allen—

—If they cannot save us, perhaps they may save themselves—

"He is ill," Munson's voice said, and Gary could hear him clearly. "Notice the pallor? He's completely paralyzed; I can't feel any heartbeat."

"Damm those Cygnians," Allen said; "they've poisoned him somehow. Is he dead?"

"Not yet; he's still breathing slightly."

"Then find out what's wrong with him. You're a doctor, aren't you?"

"Yes, but what can I do without instruments? Help me take him out upon a table so I can examine him more closely."

"Don't, you fool! The Cygnians will see that they outnumber us, three-to-two, and the fight will begin. We might kill two before we go down ourselves, but that means the third Cygnian will get this ship. Stay in the cubicle for a few minutes and then leave; we'll have to pretend that he's still sleeping. Have you anything that can be used as a weapon?"

"Only this pen-knife."

"Then give it to me; I'll wait for the chance to kill Michener Zero. That will give us an even chance."

Hull Forty's thoughts again formed in Gary's mind. *—Were you able to reach them?—*

—No. They're going to attack Michener, for they think you now outnumber them. Any idea what caused this paralysis?—

—*Poison in the food. That would explain why the corpses were so emaciated. They knew the food was bad—*

—*But everyone else ate the food, yet they seem to be alive and well—*

—*Slow reaction, I suppose. How can I tell? I felt no pain whatever, only sleepy. I drew the curtains of the cubicle, and tried to concentrate on the nature of this vessel. It was fantasy, of course, caused by a tired mind, but I came to the conclusion that the ship was—*

—*That the ship was what?—* Gary asked anxiously—*I sense a third mind entering among us. Is it Michener Zero or any of the others? Have they also become paralyzed?—*

—*No—*Hull Forty thought slowly—*Not yet.*

—*HE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION—the third mind said—THAT THIS SPACESHIP, I, JUDAS, WAS ALIVE...*

HAYDEN said, disappointedly, "Well? The story is not finished. Who got the spaceship after all? The Earthmen or the Cygnians? And what's this closing note about the ship being alive? That I don't understand at all."

The others, seated in a semi-circle among the cubicles, were equally confused.

"Each time I tell the story," Gary said, "I seem to leave out some important part. Getting senile, I suppose. We were all poisoned by the food, of course. The paralysis occurred only when some particular thought-process in the mind acted as a catalytic agent activating the powerful sedative. In our case, this was the realization that we were trapped inside a living

entity from outer space, that wore the guise of a spaceship."

"I've seen many strange things," Hayden said, "but a living spaceship! By the stars, that takes the ore-vein!"

"It's theoretically possible," Strode said; "I've seen sentient concrete on the asteroids; and then there's the mercurial people on Centauri, that pass through the cycle of vapor, rainfall and river, and are still able to carry on a civilization. Why not some metal substance that can change its form and even fly between the planets or stars?"

"Why not indeed?" Gary said.

"It's—it's quite an idea," Strode said unevenly. "But I'm pretty tired. Need sleep. Very—very sleepy."

"Goodbye, Strode," Gary said as he watched the young man lumber away, struggling for the cubicle and then collapsing upon it with a sigh. Strode closed his eyes and lay as still as death.

"How could such a ship live?" Hayden asked; "what was it doing on that planetoid in the first place?"

"Most life-forms," Gary said, "depend on other living organisms for substance. Some live on sunlight, air, and water. You've probably all seen living things which consume gamma radiation—the crystals of Procyon, for example. Why not, then, a living organism which can live on thought waves?"

"Venusian mud!" Gorham snorted. Two of the men yawned sleepily. McHugh's head was tilted as if he listened for something. "Sooner or later it would be discovered, and wiped out by the culture it was living on."

Gary nodded. "That's probably why it travelled from one star-system, and one galaxy, to another. It would look for a system where space-travel was so common that it could wander about without raising too much suspicion. It would drop upon some planet and wait for a group of inquisitive visitors to enter and to throw away the emaciated, worn-out bodies whose thought-waves had been used to propel the ship. As



soon as the occupants became aware of the true nature of the ship, they would be paralyzed, so that they could not endanger the vessel. They would retire to the cubicles where—slowly going insane—their thought-waves would keep the ship going. When they died, the ship would land on another planet and the process would start all over again."

Vincent and Seagar arose and unsteadily waited to their cubicles where they laid down with a sigh.

"What happened to the Cygnians and Earthmen in the ship? Did Allen kill Michener Zero?"

"No. Michener showed the two remaining Earthmen the body of Hull Forty, and the quartet decided to continue the truce. Eventually they all came to the same conclusion, and all were equally paralyzed."

GORHAM'S eyes closed. Blindly he stumbled to his cubicle.

"If your story is true," Hayden said. "Then you should be either emaciated or quite dead. None of the others are on this ship; where are they?"

"I buried them on this planet, thirty years ago; you have seen their graves."

Hayden struggled to keep his eyes open.

"But you—you're alive!"

"Yes. When Michener Zero passed under and was paralyzed, he and Hull Forty began a long thought-discussion on the nature of the ship and the possible methods of escaping from its domination. While they talked I communicated directly with the Mind itself."

"Judas... Judas..." Hayden said, trying to force the words out from a constricted throat. He tried to stand but could not. "Help me... help me..." he implored. Gary and McHugh remained sitting. Hayden crawled on his knees to the cubicle and rolled in; he moaned once and then was silent.

"I told the Mind that it could get much more food if it stayed within this system, instead of depending upon the accident of landing upon a planet

with living organisms. I told it that I could help direct the ship to the places where food was in abundance, and how it could be secured without risk of detection and destruction."

McHugh asked, "You offered to be a Judas?"

"No, the ship was the Judas, that pretended sometimes to be a sightseeing vessel through the asteroids; sometimes a means of escape from a prison or labor-camp; and sometimes the property of a rich idler, who amuses himself by rescuing lost prospectors..."

"Then you—"

"I am the Judas Goat who leads his fellow-men to the slaughter room, knowing that always there will be an escape for me as long as I find six victims."

"Traitor!"

"Why not? What has the human race done for me? With Judas I can roam the stars, always free. No more obeisance to military commanders or civil governments; no more taxes; no more insults from my inferiors. Nothing but a happy solitude. I serve Judas faithfully and he serves me."

McHugh rose clumsily to his feet, his hands clutching at his throat, and his face contorting. He stood still for a moment, as if listening.

"The poison always works this way," Gary said. "In a moment, you will fall asleep because Judas wishes you to. Then you will occupy the sixth cubicle, and once more I shall be alone."

McHugh's face twisted into a smile.

"Surrender to it," Gary said, "you cannot fight the will of Judas." He waited for him to fall and when McHugh did not, he looked into his eyes.

A moment passed and he screamed. "No, Judas!" Gary shouted. "Not me! Not me! Don't betray your faithful servant after so many years. No! Spare me!"

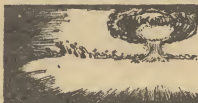
When it was over, McHugh sat alone. The years would pass—long empty years. How many before he, too, would be tossed aside, having served his purpose?

Special Article

by Lester del Rey

The "science" of whithering, like Caesar's Gaul is split into three parts: How did we get where we are? What are we doing here? Where do we go from here? And one of the "whitherers" whose theories seem to have a lot a weight, these days, is a man named McKinley...

Get Thee Behind Me, Clio



THERE'S an Italian magazine, devoted to science-fiction, which calls itself *Urania*. In case anyone has wondered, that doesn't refer to the planet Uranus, but to the Muse of Astronomy—who has become the Muse for all the sciences.

The functions of all the muses have become pretty well tangled by now. Clio, for instance, is supposed to handle most fiction, though originally representing only history. Apparently, that should put science-fiction under the joint guardianship of Urania and Clio. Heaven forbid such a union of females! The Italians were quite right; Urania has to take the sole blame.

After all, science-fiction may be much fiction and little science—but it's more science than history. We try to stick to some of the known facts about science, at least; but even reasonably careful writers, who thumb their Toynbee regularly for plots, don't worry too much about a little examination of the facts of history.

Nobody today puts the hero down

on Jupiter without some mention of a suit with built-in oxygen-supply—we know he'd die in such a poisonous atmosphere. Aside from the comic-strips, nobody expects a hero to jump ten miles up from a sidewalk without shattering the concrete; for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

But writers will, and do, perform any absurdity with history. How often have you read a story where the world is kept safe for democracy by some stupendous power in the hands of a small group? How often have you seen a vile dictatorship, on some barbarous planet, where they had excellent hand-weapons, but no other great weapons?

How frequently have you read the story of a Utopia of atomic power, where the world has learned its follies because of the very concentration of power; has reformed; and now joins Ferdinand in the sniffing of daisies, forsooth? Naturally, that's a common type of background for science-fiction. Everyone, including chiefly the politicians, knows that the way to end war

is to make some frightfully-horrible weapon, or assemble some overwhelming power. This will scare the pants off the enemy, who will then submit at once. And behold—we have universal democracy!

Back in 1934, there was already an answer to that. A historian by the name of Silas Bent McKinley wrote a book called "Democracy and Military Power". He revised it in 1941, and most libraries have a copy of one edition—if not both. And the name of McKinley, as well as the mention of the book, has been kicking around science-fiction for longer than the fame of Toynbee.

This isn't a book-review, though it is a strong recommendation that everyone should read the book. This article is actually a piece of wordage designed to scare the pants off every reader who thinks it over—even if he has grown blase about the atomic bomb—and to bring up the fact that every science-fiction writer—including myself—has been a blithering, incurable romantic, having no regard whatsoever for what science of history there is.

McKinley wrote the book to document one basic fact with which I'm concerned at the moment. That fact is that democracy has nothing to do with sweetness and light, justice and right, or hind-and-fore-sight; it has to do with balance and might. In those periods where the dominant weapon of the time was one which might be successfully used by the common man, the common man was the ruler—which meant that there was democracy. In those periods when the dominant weapon was so costly, so complicated, or so demanding of long training, that only specialists could use it, or afford it—then those specialists controlling that weapon ruled. You had oligarchy, monarchy, or dictatorship. And since many weapons *do* require vast organization or wealth, many periods were singularly free from democracy.

I shall not try to document this. Before you bring up exceptions, read the book; it deals with far more than

the fact that the long rifle created the American Revolution, or that the high cost of armor, horses, etc., created feudalism. It's a thorough examination of history; and while McKinley may have had an idea he wanted to prove, in this case he seems to me to have established his point.

LET'S STRIP that point down just a bit more. In any given period of history, the rule will rest in the hands of those who can enforce it. If a small group can overcome a large one in any contest, that selected small group will win the power to rule. If approximately equal power rests in all hands, then approximately equal rights to rule will be recognized. And all your constitutions, and fine words, mean as little as the fine words Senators of the Roman Republic orated just before Caesar came down with his finely-trained, highly-complicated little band of men to finish the end of that semi-democracy. The Roman populace could no longer hope to pick up their swords and cope on equal terms with the smashing, trained power of the legionaires—nor could the Roman populace go out and pay for legionaires whenever they needed some against the ones they thought they owned. So—dictatorship was followed by empire.

Science-fiction could make use of this idea in a lot of ways. It applies to more than just nations; it applies to labor versus management, for example. When management grew rich and strong, the laborer had no control. Only by bunching together into unions with equal strength could he achieve bargaining-power. Some of those unions may have gotten too strong—it seems that nobody can do much to control the coal situation, at least. Management, of course, has found a partial answer—they, too, have the rough equivalent of the union. Their ability to hire goon-squads to come in, and bust a few heads won't work—because the unions can handle goon-squads, too, now. Without such a

source of power in the hands of a few, reasonable democracy has come about; "workers" are definitely better off than they were a century ago.

This fact that power goes into the hands of those who can enforce it—and to the smallest group, rather than the largest, who can do that job fully—is even born out in the family. In spite of all the jokes about women ruling, men still control most of the major decisions in this country—because they have the power of their earnings. They did in most primitive societies because they had stronger muscles. (Matriarchies require a peculiar setup, and usually collapse under the stress of war, where men's fighting-power has to be counted on.) If, however, a woman can discover a power greater than that of the man, she rules; ask any man who can't stand tears, or nagging. Or ask any man who has seen his wife bring in outside power which only she can command—such as her mother, or her children—carefully schooled to work on her side.

POWER NEVER had anything to do with righteousness. When the poet wrote the nonsense about his strength being as the strength of ten because his heart was pure, there was a piece of armor over that heart, and a good sword in his hand: both cost a lot of money, and were beyond the average man's price. And democracy in those days meant pretty much equal power for the boys who could command such armor—not for the cattle known as commoners. His strength was as the strength of ten commoners, and his heart was pure feudalism!

What about the future, with which science-fiction is concerned? Well, barring something which is beyond even our definition today, we're in for the longest and strongest period of absolutism of some kind ever known, at least since the days before the Greeks devised their very limited democracy.

This doesn't mean that science-fic-

tion can't write about democracy, or even Utopian anarchy, in the future; it means that it should do so only after weighing the facts, and then finding at least a fictional answer to the problems—which it is *not* doing. Those Galactic Federations on democratic lines may sound fine, but they're based on pure, unadulterated neglect of the facts. They operate on the theory that something will be so because it would be nice to have it that way. It's as realistic as having a society based on the theory that everyone eats lavishly, without anyone bothering about working for the basic foodstuff.

Today, as never before, there is a source of absolute power which requires a terrific working-capital and technology that no individual citizen—or small group of citizens—can hope to handle. There's the atomic bomb. With it, a small, trained group can force a whole nation to knuckle under. The men who have the control of that bomb cannot be overcome by a mob with guns. And when the use of atomic or isotopic "dusts" is further developed, the mob can even be destroyed without too much risk to property.

We are developing rockets, and planning to build a space-station. We have to; if we don't, someone else will. But given a space-station, well-stocked with atomic bombs, just what can the average man do about it? Suppose he doesn't like the laws that are passed? Can he dig up a rocket-ship here, and another there? Can a group of him gang up secretly—in tiny bands, too small to be noticed—and build rockets and bombs in their back-yards? Not by a damn sight! One of those rockets might be built some time in the future for a mere hundred thousand dollars. And a bomb *might* be put together by a few hundred people—except that getting Uranium isn't going to be easy. The stuff is already under government seal, and it carries its identification along, in the form of radiation.

If the men at the head of that government tell John Doe that they have

to pass restrictive laws, against his freedom, he has to take it. There will always be emergencies to make the men passing the laws fully sure that they are only doing it for the citizen's own good. And when riots break out, any government has to put them down; that's why governors can institute martial law, even today.

To use the bomb from an Earth-base takes bombers; those cost huge sums, too.

In fact, with even our present stage of technology, it takes hundreds of thousands of men, working under the highest kind of organized cooperation; billions of dollars; vast accumulations of laboratories and factories; and highly-skilled hordes of fighting men. Only nations—and fairly large nations at that—can command the strength to equip a present army.

Aha, but that strength is the strength of the whole nation! Nope, 'tain't. It's the strength of those who are in a position to use it. If you happen to feel that you don't want to go off to foreign lands and fight, you can't do a thing about it right now. Theoretically, if all the simple Joes got together and tried to regain their authority over the government, they could. But in the first place, they won't—it takes too many before they can present strong enough a front to attract others to them.

Also, even theory has its flaws. The press is not in the hands of the people. The radio and television networks are not. The government can—and did already—impose restrictions on how these can be used.

Suppose you do overthrow those in power? That was done in Rome, too. What happens is that you now have to delegate your re-won power to a group small enough to hold the reins—then you're right back where you started. They came and got Caligula—but the empire went right on.

about their necessity; we are not an isolated people—we live in a world where other nations have to be met. But don't forget that power to know certain things has already been denied to the people. This means that those in power are necessarily increasing their hold, and those outside are slipping into positions from which they can't even hope to strike back.

Our power is too complicated for the people. Therefore, it is not *of* the people, but *over* the people. Bit by bit, the people get further and further from that power—and bit by bit, they necessarily have less and less to say about the use of that power.

Can you vote against an atomic war? Naturally, you can't. Can you vote against spending for such a war? Nope. Your representatives can; but even if all of you ganged up, those representatives couldn't honestly refuse to spend money for such a purpose. They know things you can't know; they *have* to disregard your wishes. The Roman emperor knew that the barbarians were threatening Rome—and no cry of the people for more grain could make him give them more, and sacrifice the strength of his mercenaries to do so.

You will only get absolutism because you want it—but with such weapons, you have to want it. You can, perhaps, force your representatives—even yet—to vote your way; but the other side has those weapons—he always does have something like them. And you won't demand the return of power to you; you'll go right on putting men in office to protect you. So, if they take away a little of your freedom, isn't it better than being killed? You won't be able to handle the weapons—you'll have to put men in power, and give up more and more power to them, so that they can do the job for you. That is why McKinley's thesis has "worked", and why it will continue to "work".

Well, there have been other weapons in the past, and they have all been

JUST WHAT do *you* think Security measures are for? We can't quarrel

answered. Even the mighty power of the knights, with all their technology and armor, was overcome. The long gun came along, and eventually was cheap and good enough for all men to own and use. And nothing at the time could stand before it. From the greatest development of power into ruling hands the world dropped back to democracy under the impact of a cheap leaden bullet.

Won't that happen again?

Maybe it will. There's no way known now, of course; but we can't say it's impossible. The atomic bomb, the bomber, the space-station, the military colonies on the Moon and the planets—you don't think simple citizens will get there, honestly, do you?—are not merely different in degree, but in kind, from other weapons. But possibly there can be an answer.

IT WON'T be found by giving the average man pocket-sized atomic bombs he can build in his cellar. No civilization conceivable to us could permit such a thing, or exist under it. So long as there are men who sincerely believe that God has told them to kill the sinners (meaning all but their tiny group), or that *all* nonconformists to their conformity should perish, a weapon as frightful as the atomic bomb cannot build civilization by being given to the people at large. If it is less powerful than the big bombs-plus bombers-plus space stations-plus other developments, it won't do the job. If it is that powerful, it will result in chaos, not democracy. The dreamed-about "equalizer" won't produce Utopia—and it won't protect the citizen, after all; so long as the men in power can eliminate whole cities in retaliation, the citizens themselves cannot permit citizens to hold weapons against that government!

The long rifle could do the job, only because it was a limited weapon. It took long enough to kill off a sizable number, for any others in the group to organize and take care of the offender; yet it was still fast enough to

overcome the traditional superiority of the military powers. It was a selective weapon. The bomb is not at all selective; it cannot be safely used by minutemen! The citizens *have* to give power enough to their rulers to prevent anyone from having such a weapon—even though that means giving up their own right to the only control they could have over their rulers. It's a pretty vicious circle.

And whether you or I *want* absolutism of some kind or other—probably military, since the military arm is the one entrusted with the weapon—has nothing to do with it. Logical necessity rules; there must be tightening controls, security regulations, more authority in certain military hands. To deny such a necessity is sheer, blind stupidity. We can and should attempt to hold onto all the rights we can as citizens—but we cannot and dare not fail to recognize that new conditions require new answers. I would have little use for anyone who stood up now and began crying for us to arise and smite the hand that rules us. That hand is there because it has to be there; our very lives depend on seeing that the government shall have adequate power. If the power is abused, we'll have to do what we can to correct the abuse; but we can't deny the use of such power!

What will the answer be—and when? No one knows. Perhaps somewhere there might be a defense against all such weapons—not a new and better offense, as the answer has usually been in the past, but a perfect, individual, portable defense. If so, it's in the very far future, and those writers who try to conceive of it have my sympathy. As to when—there's another interesting theory of history today; that deals with the study of cycles, on which there are also books available at the libraries.

They seem to indicate that things will somehow swing back. In another five hundred and ten years—or perhaps twice that time—the world should

[Turn To Page 96]

Paul
found
himself
in a
forest.



by Harry Warner, Jr.

(illustrated by Tom Beeham)

THE WORLD IS YOURS

If you think the prizes on giveaway-shows are fantastic today, just consider the magnanimity of Walters and Walters, manufacturers of Sanisoap, in 1985!



PAUL STEARS offered an ashtray, but the short man with a belly waved it away. "No, thanks," the chubby man grunted, puffing harder on the cigar. "I never use those things."

Paul's wife, June, stared in fascination at the perfectly-formed cone of ash, protruding from the end of the cigar, ready to fall onto her best rug.

"As I was saying," the short, fat man continued, "you probably haven't seen Sanisoap's famous telequiz." He passed his hand across his face, trying

to wipe away a worried look. It didn't wipe off.

"That was a rhetorical question," he continued, ignoring his cigar's ash; "the show couldn't be known to you. But it happens that you, Mr. Stears, and you, Mrs. Stears, are closely connected with our latest grand-prize."

"You mean we've won something!" June jumped up, eyes sparkling. "That's wonderful; I've never won anything in my life."

The chubby man poked again at his worried expression. "No, it isn't that. It's the opposite, in fact. You, Mrs. Stears, are yourself one of the prizes."

"How do you keep that cigar going without losing the ash?" Paul interrupted. "It isn't growing—"

"What did you say?"

Paul was on his feet, too, after the doubletake.

"This is an Eterno," the visitor explained calmly. "You don't have them yet? Think of a candle. You don't need an ashtray when a candle burns. The Eterno doesn't need one, either." He regarded the plump tobacco-cylinder with satisfaction.

"Just what was that crack about Mrs. Stears being a prize?" Paul was towering over the visitor, fists clenched, face flushed.

"It's a very unusual situation for you," the visitor began, squirming in his chair and hunting words. "It's not just Mrs. Stears who is a prize—not any more than this house or you or this whole city of Washington."

"So my family and my home and my home town are contest-prizes," Paul repeated. "That's nice; now we'd like to continue a quiet evening at home."

The fat man didn't move, but he looked sad. June gently laid his hat in his lap. Still the visitor didn't move. Paul's stretched temper snapped. He grabbed the lapels of the expensive-looking suit and jerked, to yank the intruder from the chair.

The visitor didn't yank. Paul's fingers grated harshly along the un-

yielding cloth, and little spots of blood appeared at their tips.

"It's no use to try to treat me rough. Now, sit down and listen to me, both of you." The fat man's words had assuredness to them, despite the sadness of his face. June, paler now, pulled Paul back, and they perched on the arm of a chair, close together.

"I'm J. Russell Montague, from Walters & Walters who make Sanisoap. Sanisoap sponsors 'The World Is Yours,' the tv program, through an advertising agency, but we keep a legal staff to handle any—ah, unpleasantness arising from the show."

"Paul's a lawyer, too," June said meekly.

"A man from Dubuque is the new grand-prize winner," Montague said, then sighed deeply. "He knew more about monadic isotopes than anyone could have guessed."

"When is this quiz on the air?" Paul asked.

"Thirty years from now. That is, it's thirty years sideways and ahead."

MONTAGUE pointed the Eterno at Paul. "I've come from the future—though not exactly your future." June pressed closer to Paul.

"A little while ago, my time, a Walters & Walters chemist who was trying to get more energy into flour stumbled onto time-travel. We make flour, too. But this time-travel works only one way, into the past. You can't travel into the future, because it doesn't exist. And every time you go into the past, your presence there affects the course of history, and creates a brand new future, diverging from the one in which you live. So time-travel seemed to be a dangerous thing. If Walters & Walters had given it to the world, the present would be depopulated, because everyone would want to escape modern life and go back into the past.

"We decided to keep control of time-travel, and let it be used only by the grand-prize winners on our quiz. This

way, we give away, in effect, the whole world to each winner. The winner has his choice of when he'd like to live—any time from prehistory to yesterday. We take him to that point and leave him there. His presence automatically creates a new world of his own, different from the real one in which he's been living. The best part about it is that the winner, in his own personal world, can't be harmed. You saw what happened when you tried to throw me out?" Montague asked, pointing the Eterno at Paul.

Paul nodded. "But, man, I'm just as real as I was when you walked in."

"Yes, to yourself—and to everyone else in the world, except me. But I'm actually the only real person in this world, except for our prize-winner, of course." He grimaced.

"What's all this leading up to?" June asked.

"Well, Will Wilson, the man from Dubuque, decided he wanted to come back to Washington in 1953. You're responsible, Mrs. Stears; you're a model, aren't you?"

"Not now. I did some work before I married Paul."

"That's it. Wilson is a queer character. He fell in love with some advertising-photographs of you in old magazines. In the real future, you and Mr. Stears are still happily-married, but you're in your fifties, and too old for him. He wants you while you're still young, so he picked this time."

"Where is he?" June asked. The corners of her mouth were drawn, and her face was whiter, despite the unbelievable story.

"Out in the time-travel car."

June rose abruptly and hurried toward the back of the house. Paul got up, walked over to the seated Montague, and kicked hard at the little fat man's shins. Piercing pain shot up Paul's leg, and a dent appeared in the leather toe of his shoe.

Montague also rose, patting Paul on the shoulder in friendly fashion. "I'm really sorry," he confided. "We try to weed out contestants, and give the

grand-prize only to sweet old ladies who just want a little cottage in the days of Martin van Buren. But this fellow slipped through; he's going to make himself world-dictator, too."

Paul looked at the telephone in the hall. *What number do you call, he asked himself, when you want to report that the world has been given away in a contest?*

THREE LOUD footsteps sounded on the front porch, then a grating crash. The front door fell into splinters. A thin fellow with wild hair, and wilder eyes, strode through the ruined doorway.

Montague rushed up, waving his hands frantically to block the intruder's progress. Then he introduced the newcomer to Paul. It was Will Wilson.

"Where is she?" the seedy person demanded. His voice squeaked. His eyes jumped from one thing to another in the room. He picked up a glass paperweight, examined it near-sightedly, then crushed it into shreds with a slight pressure of his fingers.

"Like a juvenile delinquent," Montague confided to Paul in a whisper. "Exults in his new power." Then, in a louder voice, the executive shouted; "Mrs. Stears!"

Wilson's face gleamed in anticipation. But there was no reply. New wrinkles of worry on his face, Montague led the others toward the back of the house.

No one was in the kitchen. Will slapped the pantry door, which split into two sections with a gaping hole between them. No one was in the pantry. Montague stuck his head into the doorway that led to the basement.

Wilson's face was alarmingly red, and he was spluttering.

"Remember that blood pressure," Montague soothed, leading him to a chair and pushing him down into it. "You know how we explained it. No one can harm you in this world, but you could still get sick."

Wilson bobbed up instantly from the chair, as if it were red hot.

"I want that woman!" he shouted, ending in a squeak again. "I won this world fair and square!"

Montague wiped his face and appealed to Paul. "Do you know where she could have gone? Really, it would be better if she didn't try to get away. You can't stop him; and if he's excited, it'll be worse in the end."

"Maybe she went down to look at the car you came in," Paul suggested. He crumpled in his hand the small sheet of memo-paper that he had found lying on the kitchen table. It bore one word in June's scrawl: "Ann." Ann was June's best friend, lived two miles away in Georgetown, and June obviously headed for there.

"We'll go look; you wait here, Will," Montague instructed. Will had snapped on the kitchen radio, and was now listening more calmly to a news-broadcast. The bulletins told of a strange man who had come stamping through northwest Washington, leaving holes where his shoes smashed the concrete, avoiding capture by shoving over everyone who attempted to stop him.

"You don't know how sorry we are," Montague was saying shakily as he led Paul toward the time car. "This fellow is going to grow even worse as he gets used to power."

THE VEHICLE was parked at the alley. It looked like an ordinary auto.

"A good imitation, eh?" Montague exulted. "We always camouflage the time-car to look like the standard conveyance of the civilization. But we had an awful time imitating a camel for the old fellow who wanted to become a pharaoh."

"Do you leave this thing for Wilson?" Paul asked, straining his eyes in the effort to inspect the insides of the vehicle.

"No, we strand him here in this new world, and I go back to the real future... Your wife doesn't seem to be here."

"Let me go back to your time with you and plead my case," Paul asked.

"I'm a lawyer; I could show how you're violating basic—"

"Not a chance; our lawyers have taken care of that. Worlds like this one have no legal existence. You can't start a lawsuit if someone is cruel to a wooden puppet that you've carved out, can you?"

A resounding crash sounded behind them. Montague flinched. Wilson came striding down the alley, pausing to shove in the sides of each garage that he passed.

Montague dashed toward Wilson. Paul wrenched at the handle of the time-car's door, ducked inside, and began punching the buttons on the weird dashboard at random.

The ignition must have been on, because there was a slight jerk. A yell from Montague was cut short by a smooth flow of motion.

2



HE BLINKED. Arcadian groves stretched around Paul, as far as the eye could see, instead of residential Washington. The car rolled smoothly through long grass. Bird songs came from high above.

If he was in the future already, Paul thought irrelevantly, grass must have actually grown in the city streets. He punched another button, and the bird-songs became deafening. Hastily he jabbed the button and turned down the volume.

The doors contained no conventional handles for opening windows, but Paul ran his hand under the glass and the windows suddenly disappeared into the frame. Instantly the dignified homes of suburban Washington appeared around him. The birdsongs vanished in the middle of a trill.

Traffic was scarce, but the car was moving fast and Paul couldn't find any sign of a steering-wheel or brake. A

corner and red light were just ahead, too.

As Paul debated over which button to jab, the car slowed gently and rolled to a stop at the corner. It didn't start until the light changed. Paul blinked fast a couple of times. *It's no more than I should expect*, he told himself. *Automatic gearshifts; power-steering; robot headlight-dimmers; why not, a few years from now, cars that obey traffic-lights and steer themselves automatically?*

The surroundings looked like 1953 Washington, and he decided that he had moved only in space, not in time. He longed to raise the windows and see again that illusion of the forest, apparently meant to give entertainment to people inside. But it was more important to get into Montague's time. He wanted to look for June, but feared that he might betray her hiding place.

The car had side-pockets and Paul, nervously watching the vehicle avoid oncoming traffic as it headed for downtown Washington, inspected the maps that were in them. They looked like filling-station maps, except for a grid of fine lines over the surface, connecting with numbers in the margins. Paul guessed that they provided a means to set the destination of the vehicle.

The glove-compartment was still more rewarding. It opened easily to reveal a shining array of calibrated dials and levers. Paul's stomach felt odd as he saw the word *Probability* labeling one lever. Another dial contained numbers that stopped at 1985. Paul suspected that they meant years.

The auto passed a slow-moving truck with a burst of speed. Paul's ears suddenly caught the wail of sirens behind him. He didn't know whether those sirens were meant for him, but he couldn't waste time. He yanked at the lever under the dial with the list of years. It moved with unexpected ease.

THE CAR suddenly was rolling along a broad court toward a huge block of gleaming buildings just ahead. It stopped voluntarily as it neared

them and its motor cut off automatically.

Paul leaped from the time-car and raced toward the building. He gawked upward, like any yokel, wondering when Washington had relaxed its rules about the height of buildings.

No one in the corridor paid attention to him as he entered. The men looked like 1953's men, except for loud suits.

A receptionist's desk stood far down the corridor. Paul stopped there, then couldn't get any words out for a moment—partly because he was out of breath, partly because of shock at seeing a girl with a crew haircut. Finally he managed to gasp: "Sanl-soap?"

"Walters & Walters?" The girl cast a withering look over his quiet gray suit. "Thirty-fourth floor. Whom shall I announce?"

"I have an appointment with Mr. Montague," he lied.

The girl poked at a switchboard, then told Paul that Mr. Montague was out. He was having ulcer trouble and might not be back for a while.

Paul retreated to the building's entrance, wondering whether Montague had returned to this future from his past. Paul had stolen the only time-car in 1953, but he felt dizzy when he tried to decipher the possibilities of a second time-car going back and returning Montague just as promptly.

The street outside the building looked almost normal, except for short-haired women, and loudly dressed men, strolling in the bright sunshine. Paul found a drugstore in the next block, after watching the undriven autos in fascination, for a few moments.

The telephone-directory was in ten volumes, by now. Paul found the section containing the S's, and flipped until he found Stears. His name was there, and the address wasn't changed, so he must have been able to keep up payments on the house. But that didn't give any clues about June's fate.

Paul's finger was dialing his number, when he realized that a conversa-

tion with yourself might be pretty rugged. Besides, if the Paul of the future was the only genuine Paul, he wouldn't feel kindly toward this newly branched-off Paul of the past. So he walked out of the phone-booth without completing the call.

Suddenly determined to take some action, no matter how foolhardy, Paul returned to the Sanisoap building, snubbed the receptionist as he passed her, and jabbed viciously to attract the elevator. He found every door on the 34th floor lettered with the Walters & Walters name. He opened one at random.

A VERY large man was pacing up and down the room, along floors and walls that looked like faintly glowing neon. The big man looked startled at Paul's appearance, but recovered promptly and said: "So you're here. Where's Montague?"

"What are you going to do about this mess?" Paul countered, trying to decide whether the big man knew his identity.

"I'm only Chotiner; I can't do a thing without Montague. If his ulcers act up again because of this..." The big man glowered, and punched a handful of buttons on his desk. Instantly four other men of distinction rushed into the office, accompanied by secretaries, and formed a semi-circle behind Chotiner.

"Montague sent me back here alone," Paul insisted. "Wilson turned out to be too dangerous; he's going to enslave the world."

Chotiner groaned, then said: "Well, I'm very sorry, especially about your wife...you *are* Mr. Stears, aren't you? But I'm sure that Mr. Montague explained to you the legal non-existence of your world."

"What do you think your customers will think when they learn that you've turned a dictator loose?" Paul demanded.

"They'll never learn," one of the other men interrupted. "Wilson won't have any way of communicating with

the real world, after Montague leaves him. And of course, we can't let you run around loose in this one."

Paul kicked disgustedly at a wastepaper basket, and had the satisfaction of seeing a giant hole appear in its side. Even the future had inferior material, he decided. Chotiner walked over to him, and laid a friendly hand on his shoulder, saying:

"Look, Stears, if you work this thing right, you can probably become vice-chancellor in Wilson's dictatorship. Now, we'll take you back to your own time, and we'll have a long talk with Wilson; we'll explain to him how nice it would be if he made friends with you as well as with your wife. I think that a couple of our psychologists..."

Paul turned on his heel and dashed from the room, despairing of bucking these men of the future, unaided. He got a good start on them, and dived into an elevator before they were out of the offices.

Paul dashed for the time-car as the elevator door slid open at the first floor. Feet pounded behind him an instant later, then faded. A backward glance revealed his luck; his pursuers had turned in the wrong direction, assuming that he had headed for the back of the building.

Paul sprinted past the receptionist, into the street, and toward the time-car. It struck out like a sore thumb on the street, among the more modern vehicles of the future. A uniformed man was just walking away from it, after inserting a slip of paper into the windshield, and Paul realized that he had parked illegally.

He leaped inside, yanked the year-switch away from its normal position, and nothing happened. Trying to remember what he had done before, he pulled other levers and turned a couple of knobs at random. The jerking sensation came again for an instant, and that sense of motion. A forest again popped into view all around the car.

Feeling better, Paul reached for the

door to roll down the windows. His jaw dropped when he realized that the windows hadn't been rolled up. That was a forest around him; it gave out a pleasant aroma of growing green things, and the car was having trouble making progress through the tangle of underbrush.

PAUL WHISTLED in a low tone, and managed to stop the time car.

"I must have gone 'way back," he told himself in awe. This part of the country had been thoroughly built-up—for the last two centuries, at least. But there wasn't a house in sight, and it might be dangerous. There would be Indians and wild animals if he were in the early days of the nation.

But the dial said 1953. Paul's suspicions had just fastened themselves on the lever marked *Probability*, it seemed to have moved. His hand was about to try to adjust it, when he saw a human figure moving through the trees ahead.

One finger on the lever that might mean normalcy, Paul waited. The figure advanced slowly, paused at the edge of a thicket, then moved boldly into the clearing. It was a girl.

Paul stared. The girl was tanned like a savage, dressed in a kind of a round khaki toga, but she was white. No Indian had ever had those pink cheeks and pale bare feet or blonde hair.

She walked slowly but unafraid toward the car. Paul stuck his head out the side window and said: "Hello."

She stopped instantly, looking at the vehicle with puzzled eyes, barely twenty feet away.

"Where am I?" Paul asked. She must be just as puzzled over this time car bobbing up in a primeval forest, he reflected.

The girl moved two steps closer, then bent and picked up a handful of small stones. She tossed them vigorously through the car's window. Most of them caught Paul squarely in the face. Then the girl turned and ran.

Suddenly all Paul's worry over his wife, his world, his position in time, and his loss of a comfortable normal existence coalesced into a white-hot mass of anger against the girl. Paul leaped from the car, determined to catch her. She shouldn't throw stones at strangers, and she might be able to supply information.

There was no real path in the forest, but Paul found the going easy as he chased the fugitive. He glanced back occasionally to fix the location of the time-car, which he mustn't lose. Paul asked himself which one of the Marx Brothers made his living chasing blondes.

He caught up to her after a couple of hundred yards. She seemed to be giggling as he neared her. She turned, only five feet ahead of him, and something caused her face to be covered with an expression of terror.

Paul grabbed her shoulder, swinging her around. She fought like a tigress, silently and desperately, to break free. Her gleaming white teeth snapped a fraction of an inch from Paul's arm, and he decided it was no time to be a gentleman. He chopped viciously with the right side of his palm, just below her right ear. She sank to the ground as if shot.

GASPING, Paul looked around. No other living creature was in sight, but someone else would get a bad impression of the situation. He had to get the girl back to the time car for questioning.

Long vines hanging from the trees looked tough. Paul hacked off several lengths with his penknife, and used them to bind the girl's wrists behind her back. She was whimpering a little and beginning to stir as he finished.

The girl rolled over, opened her eyes, shook her head, and struggled to her feet. Instantly she darted for freedom, but Paul hung on grimly to the improvised halter. It stopped her, and she stood quietly, seeming to accept the situation.

Paul pointed back toward the time

car, and she walked meekly in that direction. Her face had lost its fear by now.

Paul sat her down on the vehicle's running board, strapped her ankles together with his belt, and leaned against a fender in an effort to think. He must discover where or when he was. Walking back to the time car, he had observed several important things.

The forest was unreal in some respects. It was wild, but he hadn't seen an insect yet. The girl apparently wasn't civilized, hadn't said a word, and simply stared at him—fearlessly now. But her hair, a tumbled mess from the struggle, was clean; and it showed evidence of recently being combed and parted.

With a sudden inspiration, Paul grabbed her feet and inspected the soles carefully. There was no sign of callous or roughening on the pink skin. He lit a cigarette, realizing that this girl usually wore shoes.

She made her first sound since the chase—a guttural noise that resembled a word—and ventured a small smile. Paul, feeling foolish, could only grin in return. She repeated the word, and nodded vigorously toward him, opening slightly her lips and puffing. He got the point, placing a cigarette between her lips and lighting it. She inhaled with satisfaction, smiling cordially.

Pointing to himself, Paul said: "Paul." The girl squirmed, as if to show that she couldn't point with bound hands, looked down at herself, and said something that sounded like "Lizbet."

Paul pointed to the forest around them, and said: "Forest." Instantly he regretted it, because his gesture might have meant distance trees, world, south, or a dozen other things. But the girl's reply startled away his doubts for she said: "veld." Long afternoons in college, trying to beat German into his brain, flashed through Paul's memory. The girl's word sounded like a gentler pronunciation of the German words for forest or world.

It was the clue. More pointing indicated that Lizbet spoke a language like a distorted German. She seemed to enjoy the game, and when he untied her for pointing purposes, she made no effort to run off. They practised talking, Paul having less trouble getting the rudiments of Lizbet's speech than she encountered with his. It took only an hour for him to understand that she was hungry and knew where some berries were growing. They picked them together while Paul got a working knowledge of her prepositions and adjectives. By the time they returned to the time car, Paul could ask a complicated question like:

"Where do you come from?"

The girl rattled off an imposing string of guttural syllables that meant nothing to him. "Now, where are you from?"

He spread his hands helplessly. "It wouldn't mean more to you than that did to me. I just came here by accident." The girl's talk was certainly not pure German, leading him to believe that he had moved in the dimension of probability as well as in time.

3



THEY COMPARED historical events, clearing up the situation somewhat. In the girl's past, the British had lost an enormous battle at a strange town in France in the early 18th century. British influence in the American colonies had declined; the Pennsylvania Dutch had become the major cultural force throughout North America as a result of certain mysterious agricultural improvements they had wrought; and immigration from the Low Countries had soared. The whole continent now spoke a variant formed from the combination of several Teutonic languages. There hadn't

been an American Revolution, either. Lizbet was vague about the details, but Paul gathered that the continent had become independent by peaceful means.

"I think they're working on time-travel in the city, but they haven't had any luck yet," she said.

"If you have cities, why were you running around like a savage in the forest?"

She stared at him, giggled, then blushed deeply. Pushing the hair back from her eyes, she said: "Your customs must be different from ours. Don't you get married?"

"Of course."

"Then you must choose your mates in some other way. This is our ritual; certain days in the year are set aside for this. The young folks who are ready to get married come out into the forest-preserves, dress up like our ancestors, and the boy chases the girl he decides to marry. It's symbolic of the old days. As soon as he catches her, they're legally married. I thought that you were a boy I knew when you came after me; and I didn't get scared until you were close enough to see how you're dressed."

The forest was cool but sweat was trickling down Paul's forehead. He didn't like the way Lizbet was snuggling up against him, as they sat in the time car. "I really wouldn't have fought very long," she said gently, and rested her blonde head on his shoulder.

Abruptly, Paul rose and walked out into the forest. Lizbet was at his side instantly, like an affectionate puppy. Paul's legal mind was chasing down the bloodcurdling ramifications of the laws of this world, and trying to chase away the old saw about imitating the Romans.

HE LOOKED up and down her young body, then tried to speak in an impartial manner: "Look. I'm already married to a woman, back in my own time and world. I don't know your customs and your laws, so they

don't affect me. I'm sorry if I accidentally entered into your ritual."

"You won me, fair and square." Lizbet rubbed the spot beneath her ear tenderly, and smiled.

"You'd better go back into another part of the forest and wait for someone you know. I'll just get out of this world—I think I'm learning about the way that time-car works—"

"No," she interrupted. "It's not far to the edge of this preserve. All my folks are waiting there; I'm late already, and they'll be worried sick about me if you don't take me to them right away. You'll have to hurry." She grabbed his arm, shoved him into the driver's seat, and watched attentively as he gingerly prepared to put the mechanism into motion along the ground.

A road appeared, only a few hundred yards away. Lizbet pointed out directions, and they reached a broad avenue, lined with trees. The only traffic on the road consisted of scuttling conveyances that looked exactly like railroad handcars. Pleasant-faced families were aboard them, the men pumping vigorously at a long lever to provide motion.

The house peered cautiously through the trees, squat buildings that were vaguely Dutch in appearance, with a hint of the architecture that Paul remembered from a fairy book of his pre-school days.

They finally reached Lizbet's family at an establishment that was a combination of hotel and dude ranch. Paul had the uncomfortable feeling of encountering the highest crust of an alien society. Her father was comfortably stocky and red-faced. Her mother was just plain highbrow.

Lizbet did the talking to them too rapidly for Paul to catch most of her words. Her parents peered at Paul as if he were an interesting new bug. Guests at the resort swarmed around the time car, but studiously refrained from touching anything.

Paul spent five days and nights in that place. The von Hoogstraadts, Lizbet's family, found him a room at the hotel, after a long controversy over his lack of a pedigree.

The von Hoogstraadts, fortunately, knew a couple of leading scientists who lived nearby. They showed up on the second day, and startled Paul by refusing to speak anything except Latin with a bad accent. He managed to learn, through their jabber, that science was a distinct guild in this world, with its own union regulations and language.

The scientists prodded the car gingerly inside and out. They did a remarkable amount of philosophizing over it, but also turned up surprising amounts of facts about the operation of the vehicle. By the fifth day, Paul felt that, in theory, he could operate it as skillfully as Montague. He felt no need to shorten his stay here, because he was convinced that he could return to the instant he had left his own world, by proper manipulation of the dials.

Lizbet and her mother were the real problems. Both seemed to think that Paul was legally married to the blonde girl, regardless of whether he had a wife in his other life. Paul's inability to rattle off the names of his ancestors was the only thing that prevented immediate fulfillment of the signature of the necessary documents.

On several expeditions through the area, Paul found himself liking the people and their civilization, more and more. In this probability-line, the people had refused to let civilization get the better of them. They had wiped out bothersome insects a century before DDT was known in Paul's own world, but hadn't built any railroads or airplanes. They had plenty of science but few gadgets, and most of them lived in small villages.

On the fifth day, Paul found himself completely charmed by a small house with attached garden that Lizbet wanted to occupy, as soon as he had produced the necessary facts about his pedigree.

TOSSING in his room that night, he suddenly realized that another day or two in this land would make him a captive to it forever. An enormous guilt-complex was already shaping up within him, over his failure to rescue June.

Paul leaped from bed, crawled through the window of his room and dropped from a porch roof to the soft earth. The fairy-tale land was dark around him. He found the time-car safe within a small shed. Feeling sorry for the scientists, who were having such a lot of fun with their theories, he set the controls for his own time, hoping that the probability lever worked in proper fashion.

He threw the switch, and it was as if the projectionist had thrown a new reel onto the movie screen. Paul grabbed the wheel, as the car drove through Washington's familiar streets, not on automatic steering.

He stopped to buy a newspaper, and said triumphantly but dismally:

"Didn't miss it by much, at least."

The date on the paper indicated that he had come back one day after he had started.

But the banner streamer on the newspaper declared: *Dictator Will March On New York.*

The main story was in smeary 18 point type. It began:

Will Wilson, proclaiming himself owner of the world and its dictator, set up headquarters in the Lincoln Memorial today.

The little man who has a superman's powers said that he will personally eject the President from the White House tomorrow.

'I'm going to New York, after that,' he told a reporter, 'but there's someone here that I want to find first.'

Police and the armed services have been powerless to stop the slender, ill-tempered individual who insists that he has legal documents making him owner of the world. Bullets bounce off him. An armored car that crashed head-on

against him on Constitution Avenue was wrecked.

The second page of the newspaper was devoted to pictures. Wilson's face bore a triumphant, half-mad expression. Column after column was devoted to speculation about a woman that the superman appeared to be seeking.

DRIVING toward his home, Paul suddenly realized that Montague might still be there, waiting for a time-car. He turned sharply, and took a winding course toward the home of Ann. There was little traffic, and few people on the terrorized city's streets.

There was no light in Ann's apartment, but when he pressed the button downstairs, the answering buzz sounded promptly. Ann was holding open her door, peering into the dark hall, before he had reached her floor.

"Where's June?" he asked anxiously. Ann's homely face broke into a welcome smile, as she beckoned him inside.

"You can't stay here," she told him in a whisper. "They traced June to my place, but she got away before they arrived. The queerest little fat man with a stomach-ache has been driving me crazy ever since, trying to get me to say where she's hidden. I have to keep telling him that she didn't say where she was going, then I have to give him sleeping pills and bicarbonate of soda."

"That's Montague; he must be steering clear of Wilson, too. You think June is safe?"

"She was heading for your cabin in the mountains. I gave her some blue jeans and an old jacket that made her look a lot different. Be careful. They're hunting that car of yours."

Paul dashed out of the apartment, took a deep breath when he saw the time-car undisturbed at the curb, and drove away fast, heading for West Virginia's high hills. He didn't fear pursuit now, feeling confident that he could plunge a couple of minutes into the future to escape Wilson or Montague.

The mountain was in twilight by

the time Paul reached the dirt road leading to their cabin. He was nervous, because he had a nagging feeling that the vehicle needed gas, even though the scientists of Lizbet's world had been confident that power came from a mysterious sealed box without a gauge.

Parking under a clump of trees, Paul walked up the narrowing trail toward the cabin. Suddenly June rushed from nowhere into his arms.

She was still wearing the blue jeans and looked hungry.

"This was the only place I could think of, after they started to search every house in Washington," she explained. "The lake's out there, and I figured that if Will came after me, I'd just jump in the water. He might be a superman, but I'll bet that he'd get tired swimming before I would."

Grinning, Paul said: "We'll save that as a last resort. Right now I want to get to the root of the evil. I don't think anyone except Montague can do anything about Will in our world. It's the people in the future who will have to help." Then he explained what he had done and learned since June slipped out of the house. He censored the account of his days with Lizbet, slightly.

Fortunately, June had brought along a flimsy dress in the small bundle of stuff that Ann had sent her. She slipped into that, while Paul decided against giving her a crew haircut. Looking old-fashioned might arouse more sympathy for her plight, he thought.

4



AUL MADE a three-point landing in the Washington of the future, and he didn't seem to have gotten into the wrong probability-channel.

They worked fast. Paul bought a cheap piece of luggage,

while June scoured the phone book for the obscurest-sounding hotel. They filled the luggage with cheap, thick magazines, and it got them into the hotel. The desk clerk and bellboy treated them as hicks, but gave them a passable room on the fifth floor.

The time-car parked in the hotel's lot, Paul and June pored through newspapers, trying to deduce facts about the future, and to learn something about Will's winning the contest. But apparently the award of a complete world to a psychopath was no longer big news. The publications contained mostly murders, baseball games, and small wars—none of which had changed greatly.

After an hour's experimentation, June had discovered the purpose of a little box beside the room's television-set. It proved to be a previewing apparatus for coming programs. Twisting dials brought call-letters and times into small windows, and snatches of programs onto the video set's screen.

"This says 'The World Is Yours' comes on the air at nine-thirty on Fridays," June told Paul.

He glanced at the dateline on a newspaper. It said Friday. A call to the desk indicated that it was only three hours before program time.

"Do you have any ideas?" Paul asked June. She nodded negatively.

"Then let's attend. Maybe we can talk them into letting us try answering questions. If we could win, at least we could go into another world, where you'd be safe from Wilson."

"And let our own world be terrorized by that maniac?" June retorted. "No. But we might as well go, anyway."



Paul's heart did a flipflop when he approached the parking lot. Two expensively dressed men were standing by the time-car, scanning anxiously the surroundings. June pressed closer to him.

"Looks like they've found us," she whispered. "Do we run for it?"

"No," he decided, continuing to approach the car. "That thing's our only chance. Maybe I can slip inside..."

"You're just the people I've been looking for," the man with slick hair said, rushing up and extending his hand. "You're Mr. and Mrs. Stears?"

"I don't feel very friendly toward Sanisoap people," Paul warned, ignoring the hand. "If you're trying—"

The slick-haired man giggled oddly. "Sanisoap!" He nudged his companion. "These folks think we're from Sanisoap!" The other man laughed hoarsely.

"I'd rather go dirty than use Sanisoap," the man announced, giggling again. "I'm master of ceremonies for 'Your Biggest Headache.' That's a really good television show, and we've been hoping that you folks from a past would be our guests."

"You give away lifetime supplies of aspirin?" June queried.

THE MAN giggled louder, then he explained. "Your Biggest Headache" also was presented Friday nights. It solved problems for people. It had moved one small town five miles away from a river that kept having floods. It invented a gadget that first dehydrated, then pulverized used-up chewing-gum wads. Several frustrated maidens had become happy and desirable after the program had arranged for nose-straightening operations. It might be able to help this couple's unique difficulties; so it had hunted all over town for the time-car, finally locating it by its archaic appearance.

Paul looked at June. She made a gesture that seemed to say, What have we to lose?



They were whisked to a television station's gingerbread magnificence, and spent a half-hour signing legal forms.

"We must be clear of legal responsibility, you know," the master of ceremonies explained. Silently, Paul wondered what value his signature possessed, when he was legally nonexistent.

Then they were on the air. Paul realized that this meant the end of their privacy in the world of the future, but his lawyer's instinct had won out over his sense of caution. After he and June had answered questions and displayed their old-fashioned personal belongings, Paul was permitted to make a final impassioned plea:

"So you see, friends, the sanctity of marriage has been violated. Is it right that a television program in one age should send a mentally warped person back into a past age and allow him to wreak havoc? Is it right that that evil little man should be permitted to affect the happiness of me and of uncounted millions of other persons in that world?

"You folks out there aren't lawyers but you have a sense of justice, I'm sure. And now that I've told you about it, the people who started all this trouble know where to find me. Well, let them come. I'm counting on public opinion from you freedom-loving folks to make certain that right and justice will prevail in my world!"

There was an impromptu wave of applause from the small studio audience. Then Paul and June, still blinking from the bright lights, were jostled out of the way by a troupe of actors who rushed on to give a complicated commercial. Watching it, Paul realized for the first time that this show was sponsored by a detergent called Suddyssoap. He began to understand why the program had been so anxious for him to rouse opinion against Sanisoap.

The slick-haired master of ceremonies thanked Paul, at the program's conclusion, and told him that he would receive—within a week—a summary of the advice given by people who had seen the show. When Paul began to protest the delay, he learned that

brushoff techniques had been perfected in the future. The master of ceremonies rushed off, and Paul and June stood ignored in the hall, outside the studio.

"A week!" June groaned.

"It looks as if we might have fifteen seconds," Paul answered, spotting a sudden movement at the end of the hall.

A CROWD of men suddenly had erupted from elevators. It swept down toward the couple from the unrecognized past. Most of the men wore the shining white uniforms of the police of the future.

Chotiner was in the crowd, waving his arms wildly, and shouting toward Paul and June: "All right, come along. You've caused enough trouble; we don't want any more fuss."

Paul moved in front of June as protection, but the police had already formed a circle around them. The circle began to move toward the elevators, carrying him and June along.

"It's a good thing that you aren't legally a person," Chotiner fumed. "We'd sue you if you were. Those things you've just said are libelous, slanderous, malicious. They aren't true either."

June was crying softly as they waited for elevators. Paul's mind refused to race as a mind should do at a crisis. He was friendless in this world; had no legal rights; their time-car was too far away to help; their fate was obvious. They would both be stranded back in their own world of 1953, with a madman in love with June as its unstoppable dictator.

A short man with thick glasses was plucking at Chotiner's elbow.

"Mr. Chotiner," he said, stuttering slightly. "I've been examining some old files, and there's something you ought to know." His voice dropped to a whisper.

Paul remembered that on a similar crisis, in his first trip to the future, he had felt better after kicking in the side of a wastebasket. There was no

wastebasket here, but he kicked spitefully at a thick, stone pot that contained a little palm tree.

He tried to hold back the kick at the last instant, realizing that he might fracture a couple of toes. But his foot contacted the pot; it collapsed in a hundred pieces with a weak thud, a cloud of dust rising as if he had touched off a miniature atom bomb.

"Look, Paul," June breathed.

The police had moved back a few feet, looking uncertain. At that instant, the elevator doors swung open. Chotiner grabbed June by the arm and tried to force her into it.

Paul sprang toward Chotiner, but June shoved him away. He crashed loudly into the opposite wall from the force of her shove.

"Oh, my," the short man with thick glasses was saying.

Paul put the wastebasket, the flower pot, and June's shove together in his mind. As the police circled about them undecidedly, he told June: "Try pulling the controls out of that elevator."

She looked at him in amazement for a moment, then reached inside and yanked at the box containing the push-button controls. It tore loose from the wall under her gentle tug, wires dangling crazily.

Paul took it from her hands, looked at it thoughtfully for a moment, then squeezed it. The iron and copper crumpled like a fistful of breakfast food. Chotiner was groaning and cursing, rubbing his bruised body.

PAUL STRODE deliberately toward the side wall of the building, the police breaking ranks to let him pass. He pressed his palms experimentally against the wall, exerted a moderate amount of pressure, and there was a crumpling sound.

Daylight suddenly appeared before him, as the fall gave way. Paul teetered over three hundred feet of nothingness an instant, until June grasped him by the collar and yanked him back to safe balance. Stone, steel

and plaster crashed down onto the street far below, sending people scurrying to shelter.

Paul walked slowly to a policeman who was as white as his uniform. He stuck one finger into the policeman's stomach. The officer bent double, coughing and gasping.

"The mathematics," the short man was trying to tell Chotiner. The mathematics. The thing works both ways. Us in his world, or him in our world—unstoppable!"

June stomped a couple of sizeable holes in the tile flooring, just to prove her own powers, grasping the situation.

"I think," Paul told her, "we're supermen in the world of the future, like Will Wilson is in ours."

"Maybe it's because the future is as unreal to us as the past is to them," June said, snickering and tittering nervously out of sheer relief.

Paul turned suddenly, grasped the shaken Chotiner by the shoulders, and squeezed a little. Chotiner yelped.

"You get Will Wilson out of our past and back into the future where he can't do any harm," Paul ordered. "If you don't, I'll tear out every television cable in this building, and 'The World Is Yours' will be sued for so much money by the network that it'll never get onto the air again."

"And I'll go to your factories and pour so much lye into Sanisoap that it'll eat open every housewife's hands in the country," June threatened.

An hour later, they were in Chotiner's office. Montague hustled in, Will Wilson in tow, after a hurried trip in the time-car. Wilson, oddly, didn't pay any attention to June. Montague pulled a prescription from his wallet and sent a messenger to have it filled, rubbing his stomach worriedly.

Wilson looked crushed, but Paul was wrong when he ascribed it to losing dictatorial powers.

"After you ran off with the time-car, I thought of the ideal solution," Montague whispered to Paul, out of Wilson's hearing. "It might have ended your troubles, even if you'd never discovered your own powers—the powers anyone has out of his own time. That friend of yours, Ann—she agreed to impersonate June."

"Ann impersonate me?" June asked, amazed.

"Yes. I took Wilson out to see her, and told him it was June. He almost fainted when he saw Ann's face. She had even painted a couple of circles under her eyes with grease paint. I convinced Will that those photos he'd fallen in love with were really Ann, and had simply been retouched to look different. He lost a lot of enthusiasm for 1953, then and there; and it didn't take much convincing to bring him back to his own time."

SUDDENLY, Chotiner exploded. "But Wilson won our contest! We're legally bound to give him this woman, even if he doesn't know that she's the one he wants." Wilson himself had wandered disconsolately away by now.

The tiny man with thick glasses finally succeeded in making himself heard by breaking into a desperate shout:

"But, Mr. Chotiner, I've been trying to tell you for hours what I found in our records." He turned to Paul, and asked: "Mrs. Stears is a model, isn't she?"

"She was."

"Well, I looked up in our files and found that those were Sanisoap advertisements that Wilson fell in love with. Mrs. Stears modeled for the pictures. That means she was an employee of Sanisoap at the time. So if Wilson had taken her as his woman, after going into the past, that would have made the winner of our contest a member of the family of one of our employees. That's against the contest rules, so the whole thing was against the law from the start."

"Will you let us go back to our time and promise to keep Wilson out of trouble?" Paul asked.

"You can have the time-car," Montague replied. "I think that Sanisoap is going to have to turn time-travel over to the government. It's entirely too much trouble. Even time-travel isn't worth ulcers."

Paul and June sat in the time-car, and he explained the workings of the dials to her, before sending them back to their own time.

"Don't you have any urge to go exploring in time?" June asked.

"Not in time," Paul said. His hand unconsciously crept toward the probability-dial that had brought him to Lizbet. Then he threw his right hand around June, pulled her close to him, and with the left hand adjusted the mechanism for 1953 on their own probability scale.

"Let's go home," he said. Lizbet would stay with King Arthur and the looking-glass land in his memory.



Remembered Words

The time has come for Willis Freeman, Gunter Stave, and C. C. Custer to write in and let us know what originals from our January Issue that they'd like to own; they are the authors of the letters you readers found most memorable.

If any of you winners from previous issues have not written in, better get to it — conventions are coming around, and we donate originals that haven't been spoken for, or written about, after a reasonable time.



Down To Earth

(continued from page 8)

fan that the article dealt with the future; it detailed the principal features of a thousand-mile-an-hour, delta-wing fighter." Of the present story, he notes, "I share a fannish interest in gadgets. There are several super-gadgets in the story, but they are visible to the reader only indirectly." Which, for our money, is as it should be.

Walter Kubilius is one of the many scribes to have come up from the ranks of the "fans", first appearing in the June 1941 issue of *Stirring Science Stories* with a yarn entitled, "Trail's End". He's collaborated with Fletcher Pratt on a few occasions, and his stories have been well-liked in general; one of his best is "The Day Has Come", which was reprinted in the 12th issue of the *Avon Fantasy Reader*.

At the present moment, reports upon Harry Warner Jr's first story, "Cold War", haven't reached me in large enough numbers to be indicative; I'll merely refer you to our last issue for information upon him, and note that the present novelet is in a different vein.

Lester del Rey needs little introduction, as he's appeared in our pages often before, and in the pages of many other science-fiction magazines—as well as with the novel, "Marooned On Mars", one of the Winston series. He's

author of one of the better popular volumes on atomic energy, "It's Your Atomic Age"; is presently editor of several science-fiction magazines; and his first story appeared in the April 1938 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*—a well-remembered work, entitled, "The Faithful". The current article digs into the background of the novelet he did for our initial issue of *Dynamic Science Fiction*, "I am Tomorrow". A number of readers asked me, "What about this Silas McKinley?" Well, here's something about McKinley, and his theories.



THIS BEING an anniversary issue, now is as good a time as any to discuss the inside story of our covers, and of science-fiction magazine covers in general.

When Hugo Gernsback started the ball rolling, back in 1926 with *Amazing Stories*, there was no question about whether the cover was supposed to illustrate some story in the magazine (except for an occasional "contest" cover). And I, as well as a sizeable fraction of other readers (it's a temptation to say, "the majority of other readers", but I have no way of being sure about this), looked forward to

see who among my favorite authors would "cop" the next month's cover, as much as anything else. (Edmond Hamilton and Jack Williamson were notorious "cover-coppers" in the 1928-1938 period.) Then, in the late 30's and early 40's, we suddenly began to see science-fiction magazines with covers which illustrated nothing whatsoever in the issue. I felt cheated; and, from the comments of other readers, I wasn't the only one.

The original practice was to give an artist (for many years, the famous Frank R. Paul) a manuscript—with or without specifications as to the scene you wanted him to illustrate for the cover—and go on from there. There were, however, drawbacks to this system.

1. Often the best stories didn't have the kind of scene that made a good cover.

2. Sometimes the artist didn't "get it right".

3. More frequently, some compromise had to be made for the sake of a good "display" frontispiece: thus, a scene which the author described as taking place on Earth came out on the magazine with a flashy red background. Snide comments from readers about the "red skies", "yellow skies", etc., were frequent in letter-departments. In other instances, certain aspects of the scene would have to be altered. (Artists have frequently told me that most authors visualize their scenes horizontally—fine for a double-spread illustration, but difficult-to-impossible when the artist has to plan his picture for a predominately-vertical display.) The end-result was very often a cover which was adequate-to-excellent so far a newsstand-display went, but which brought forth the well-known query, "Why doesn't the artist *read* the story?" (In some cases, the artist was just given a verbal description; in others, a few typewritten sentences, or a couple of paragraphs. Actual instances of the artist's not following a story when he had every opportunity to do so were in the minority.)

Later on, time-schedules, plus the necessities for display, forced editors to try a different approach, when they wanted a cover which *did* illustrate some story in the issue. A cover was painted to conform with the many necessities of the situation, and set up; *then* an author was called in to write a story around the cover.

Theoretically, this should be the ideal solution. In actual practice, things often went wrong with it.

1. It had to be a rush job, and/or space was short; this frequently resulted in stories which were poor to barely-competent.

2. The author did not see the cover, but merely got a sketchy description.

3. The author didn't remember the cover very well.

4. Author saw cover, and remembered it well enough, but didn't make too much of an effort to follow through on detail.

So, in the end, many readers had the same complaint: "Why doesn't the artist *read* the story?"

When *Future* started, in 1950, I was determined that each cover should bear some connection with a story in the book; for the first issue, a paragraph was inserted into the lead novelet to account for the cover; with the second issue (there was more time, then) a story was revised for that purpose; for the third issue, I already had a story which, coincidentally, fitted the general mood of the cover. The fourth issue contained a story written directly around the cover. The fifth issue had a cover painted from a story on hand—and that cover was one of the best-liked of the first volume. (It was from James MacCraig's "The Genius Beasts".) I tried to do the same thing with the initial issue of *Science Fiction Quarterly*, but extended conferences with the inner office forced out a finished job which was little more than a reference to some background-detail in the lead story.

Thus, while either system *can* re-

sult in a good cover, which is an adequate illustration for a good story, both systems can go off, one way or another.

My feeling is that the second approach—getting a story written around the cover—is more sound, basically; it requires more effort from both editor and author, but when we “hit”, we have something worth while. Jones’ “Doomsday’s Color-Press”; Blissh’s “Testament of Andros”; and the present cover-story are, I think, good examples of success here. All of them are stories which might not have been written otherwise. The first two used the cover as symbolic of the story (everything in the cover was accounted for, but the scene was not taken as an outright illustration); Vance used the picture as a direct scene. My instructions to the authors, these days are: “Take either course you like, but be sure that you account for everything you see in the cover; and, while this need not be the most important scene in the story, if it is an illustration, it can’t be just a bit of background-detail. The finished job must be such that the reader will think that the artist had either reproduced a scene faithfully, or, having read and digested the story, has grasped the basic elements, and has symbolized them in his painting.”

Looking at it, realistically, I can’t expect to have an outstanding story written around each and every cover; but there’s no justification for a mediocre one. I’m aware that some of the cover stories haven’t been all they might have been; so, if you feel that way about any such story in the future, I’m the one to blame for it.

And I’m open to re-consideration on policy if anyone wants to argue the point.

Letters

PHILADELPHIA REPORT

Dear RWL:

Thanks for your encouraging words and your help in regard to the 11th World

Science Fiction Convention. The only way that we’re going to be able to put on the best Convention ever held is if “pros” and fans join together.

The biggest news at this point is, of course, that Willey Ley is going to be the guest of honor and principal speaker at the banquet, which will probably be scheduled for Sunday night, September 6, in the magnificent Bellevue Stratford ballroom. No more need be said, for those of us who have followed Willey’s career from the days in the 30’s—when he wrote occasionally for *Thrilling Wonder Stories*—know that his talk will be one of the highlights of s-f activity any year.

Incidentally, the Bellevue has given all fans who attend the convention a special pre-inflation rate on rooms; and it’s set for all the rooms in the hotel—not just these in some corner: \$6 for singles, \$10 for doubles. All you have to do is send your reservation directly to the Bellevue Hotel, Philadelphia 3. A good thing to do at the same time you send that \$1 to Box 2019, Philadelphia 3 for your convention membership.

Things have been moving fast here; but, of course, a great deal of what is going to happen—particularly in regard to the program—can’t be announced yet, because it’s too early. One thing, though: we’d like to hear from any fans—either as individuals or as clubs—who have suggestions for the program. If you’ve got some program that made a hit when you put it on for your club, if you’ve got someone you’re dying to hear, let us know so we can see what may be arranged. Remember, no convention—whether in Philly in ’53, or anyplace else in the galaxy—can be successful if it does not reflect the general interests of all of pro-dom and fandom, rather than the pet interest of some clique. I think that the cooperation and the active support we’re getting from various of the eastern clubs—ESFA, Hydra, the New York Science-Fiction Circle, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Washington—to name just a few—and the invaluable help we’re getting from members of those clubs who are on the working committees and on the Executive Committee—proves that cooperation among the s-f fan groups pays off.

To ramble along, one of the things I specially remember about the Chicago 10th World is that excellent ballet. I think that I can promise all convention members that Philly will provide such a “first”. Rumors

are interesting at this stage; we will be hard-pressed to match the ballet—and the entire 10th convention.

But we're giving it a try.

About all that's left is to remind you once again to get that buck (\$1.00 in pre- or post-inflation currency, just so "Jawge" is still smiling) to Box 2019, Philadelphia 3, so you, too, will be a member of the 11th World Science Fiction Convention.

—Tom Clareson

DISSENT REGISTERED

Dear Sir:

We would like to comment on Mr. Leo Louis Martello's article on hypnotism, in your January number. Mr. Martello is a gentleman of considerable attainments, with whom we have had friendly correspondence; we admire him as one of the few bold enough to have spoken out in print for unpopular causes—among them that of H. P. Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Movement. At the same time, our mission being to distribute truth as best we know it, in regard to subjects bordering on the psychic and occult, we regret to differ with him on some of the points raised in his article, as follows:

I. That a person cannot be hypnotized without his knowledge, and/or that a crowd cannot be hypnotized.

It happens that we have a personal friend in India who has more than once seen the famous and much-disputed "rope trick," and other seeming impossibilities. But on one of these occasions a photographer was present, and recorded the proceedings by a series of shots. The negatives showed nothing but the yogi and his assistant in commonplace attitudes, and the surrounding crowd. Of course the credibility of a witness is always open to question; but the business and social standing of the man in question is such that he would be credited without hesitation on any other matter. Moreover, others have told us the same story.

Madame Blavatsky herself, who spent many years studying such phenomena, has said that hypnosis can be carried out entirely without the knowledge of the victim; and for those who credit the reality of the "Mahatmas," who transmitted the Theosophical philosophy through her, we have the word of one of these that nothing is

easier—at least for an East Indian operator—than to hypnotize one unknown to himself. (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 216.) It is true that the term "mesmerism" rather than "hypnotism" is used; but in those days, 1881, the terms were usually synonymous. In any case, the modern hypnotist usually has not the least idea whether it is really hypnotism or mesmerism that he is using.

Some corroboration comes from a curious angle; psychologists investigating high accident-rates on super-highways, have concluded that, under some driving conditions, there occurs just the sort of monotonous sound effects combined with dulling of the optic nerves, that have been found potent in producing hypnotism.

2. That no case has been recorded where a person has committed a crime under hypnosis.

Here again we have a field for dispute as to what "recorded" means. A number of cases have been *described*, some of them in the annals of Theosophical literature themselves; and at least one person has been convicted and sentenced for bringing about crime under hypnosis. (A French case, as we recall it; unfortunately we do not have the reference at hand.) Whether a description of such a case is a "record" or not, is again a matter of the credibility of witnesses.

Mr. Martello mentions laboratory-experiments tending to show that one cannot be hypnotized into doing anything against his moral nature; but himself admits that the experiments are unavoidably "gimmicked"—unloaded guns; glass preventing damage by acid-throwing; etc. On the other hand, we have detailed descriptions of cases such as those where the subject was told that a tree was an enemy, and upon being given a dagger, stabbed the tree with great fury. *But he did not know that it was a tree.* There are many such experiments recorded. Even if the theory was true that one cannot be made to act against his moral nature, what does that mean? Modern psychology agrees with ancient "occultism" that in each of us is hidden a beast, a murderer, kept in check only by the restraints of the conscious mind, by conscience, or by caution. The effect of hypnosis is to remove such inhibitions and to supersede them by the will and intent of the operator. Under such an influence, there is no predicting which one of us may turn out to be a criminal—if the hypnosis is deep enough

and the operator's will strong enough really to eliminate the imposed inhibitions. In any case, if the crime is brought about, society is damaged regardless of whether it was against the moral nature of the agent or not. There are millions of people who refrain from crime only for the fear of consequences—as the Boston police strike proved. Remove such fears, and what have you?

The most disquieting feature is that a crime committed by a hypnotized agent is almost impossible to detect. If the operator is competent at all, he will introduce a post-hypnotic suggestion against confession or self-betrayal, of power equal to the one stimulating the crime; and the agent himself would never suspect that a crime had been committed at all. For all anyone knows, an untold number of such unconscious criminals could be walking around among us free—and perhaps an equal number of others caught and convicted in the sincere conviction that they were victims of frameups or mistaken identity.

3. We have also to disagree about Mesmer. He did not go up a blind alley; he went up a very important road that others have failed to see at all. The "mesmeric fluid" is an actual fact in nature—we know it to be so, and not entirely from books either. There is a certain interrelation between its use and that of hypnosis as such, having to do with the function of the will in both cases; too complex to be explained in a communication of this sort. The people who investigated Mesmer messed about with the subject from various angles until they discovered hypnotism, or "suggestion," as such, thought they had the whole story, and forgot about the "mesmeric fluid," in which lie many potentialities beyond the scope of hypnotism. It is they, rather than Mesmer, who went up the blind alley. The word "mesmerism" was quickly applied to what, in reality, was hypnosis. In time it was superseded for "hypnosis" and "mesmerism" was thrown out of the window entirely.

The phenomena of the two processes can easily be confused, and one can be used while the operator thinks he is using the other; but in many respects—especially the ethical—some of the effects differ as night from day.

4. We cannot agree that damage cannot be done by hypnotism. In addition to the above, we have before us a highly authentic article from the *San Francisco*

Chronicle for November 13, 1952, giving facts, authorities, and data, very much to the contrary. It carries all the more force in that the warnings in it are given by hypno-therapists of many years' practice themselves. The main objections are summed up as follows:

"As real science studied and experimented, pseudo-science pounced on public interest. Result: a growing boom in amateur hypnotism.

"Hypnotism is based on *submission to authority*. It is the response of child to parent, follower to leader. To be hypnotized you must say in effect, 'Tell me what to do.'

"Leading psychiatrists and experts in the field have discovered that nearly everyone would like to be hypnotized. The lure? Escape from reality, from indecision.

"But science points out these dangers:

(1) Where hypnotism removes symptoms, an illness may be obscured or prolonged; (2) Where hypnotism tampers with a mental illness, and not its causes, a personality may be in danger; (3) Where hypnotism promises mastery of the mind, a habit as bad as narcotics may be formed.

"Case histories bear out these warnings."

The case histories are given.

Theosophy traditionally objects to hypnotism—even in the hands of experts—for the reasons given by these authorities, but also because of deep-seated psychic and spiritual effects that would not come consciously under their observation. *Mesmerism*—that would be another matter, in proper hands. To our mind, when psychology went off the deep end over hypnotism, and stigmatized mesmerism as an illusion, one of the great scientific detours took place.

As we say, we respect Mr. Martello, but suggest that there is still quite a *terra incognita* that he could turn his attention to if so minded.

We might say in closing that his suggestion of the use of hypnotism in war leaves us cold—with cold chills, that is. The spectacle of millions of marching soldiers artificially rendered immune to fear, and unhumanly resistant to wounds, might be appealing to some if *our* soldiers are in question. But ours are one to twenty against Soviet and Asiatic troopers, and it is just such gentry as control *them* who would be least hesitant to use the method. But as a simple matter of fact, hypnotism

or suggestion is a very old dodge in war. Self-hypnosis was the basis of the famous "berserk fury" of the Vikings; of the Malayan "runner amok;" of the charging fanatics at Khartoum, and similarly with many other cases. All these had a basis of religious fanaticism—the most potent "fetish" for suggestion or hypnosis. (Interestingly enough, the *Chronicle* article mentions that hypnotism is thousands of years old, and cites the Hindu fakirs of ancient times. The word "faker" comes from their name, but some of them were far from fakers.)

Editors, "Theosophical Notes."

REBUTTAL

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

In reply to the Editors of *Theosophical Notes*: They had gone off into the realm of the occult. I change nothing in my hypnotism article, as it's backed by the weight of authority. I've given facts which can be checked in any one of the books mentioned. The Theosophical Editors have given hearsay and what they want to believe is the truth. *Populus vult decipi, decipiat*—people who wish to be deceived are deceived.

Though I'm interested in Mme. Blavatsky and Theosophy, that doesn't blind me to the truth. Mme. Blavatsky, in 1881, was in no position to talk authoritatively about hypnosis. It's been just the past fifty years that hypnotism had really "come of age."

Anyone who rereads my article, and checks the references, and then reads the Theosophical Editors' letter will be able to form an independent conclusion of who's right. They have given no concrete references or evidence to substantiate their claims. I repeat: There's not one single case of a crime committed under hypnosis. Yes, you will hear descriptions of some. But have you ever tried to trace these down? I have; they were usually the figments of an overactive imagination.

Critics of hypnotism have always harped upon the "submission to authority" angle. And the odd part of it is that this is half true. Every child who goes to school plays a submissive part; the teacher the dominant one. Our entire social and family structure is based on this. The hypnotist does not control you. He merely points out the way. Hypnosis all takes place in the

subject's own mind; the hypnotist is just the guide. For instance you can go to Florida. A guide will show you the beautiful spots, but he cannot see and enjoy them for you. The same thing in hypnotism. Again I'll quote Freud loosely: The only people who criticize hypnotism are those who have worked very little with it, or not at all. (Volume V of Freud's *Collected Papers*, translated by Ernest P. Jones.)

As for the Indian rope trick: Harry Houdini, and many other famous magicians, have offered thousands of dollars to any one who could do it. The money has never been collected. As for the *trick* part of it, I suggest you read "The Old And New Magic" by Henry Ridgely Evans (Open Court Pub. Co., 1906) or any of Harry Houdini's books.

I'd like to point out something: A person under hypnosis is always protected by his superego. His hearing, and other senses, are highly sensitised. He knows consciously or unconsciously that if he's stabbing a tree, he's stabbing a tree. I've done hundreds of hypnoses personally and during experiments any time I've ever given a subject a suggestion of ridicule, he immediately woke up. Since the "Editors" have passed dogmatic opinions on hypnosis, I'm sure they've had some personal experience with the subject. I might add that when I first got interested, I clung to many of the misconceptions which they stated in their letter. After much study, experimentation, lecture-demonstrations and attending lectures by Dr. Lewis R. Wolberg, author of *Hypnoanalysis* and *Medical Hypnosis* (in 2 vols.) and advance-readings I've gradually relinquished these too-easily-accepted opinions. They don't hold up under the harsh light of trial-and-error tests.

Mesmer paved the way; pioneered the field. But his magnetic fluids! The Editors know "the 'mesmeric fluid' is an actual fact in nature!" How do they? Can it be photographed? X-rayed? What proof is there of such a fluid. Scientists have searched years for the answer. And don't hide behind the screen of the Mahatmas!

It's taken years for hypnotic researchers to get rid of all the popular misconceptions, and I can't allow such a letter as that of the "Editors" appear in print without an answer. The sincere reader need only refer to such authoritative books

as the following: "Hypnoanalysis" by Dr. Wolberg; "Hypnotherapy" by Brenman and Gill; "Doctors of the Mind" by Marie Beynon Rey; "Hypnotism Comes Of Age" by Wolfe and Lowenthal; "Story Of Hypnotism" by Robert W. Marks; also "Rebel Without A Cause" by Dr. Robert M. Lindner, of the U.S. Public Health Service. This book tells how a criminal psychopath was successfully treated under hypnosis. Also read "Men Under Stress" by Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel. Latter tells how it was used by army psychiatrists for the rehabilitation of maladjusted veterans.

—Leo Louis Martello, Director AMERICAN HYPNOTISM ACADEMY, 49 West 85th Street NEW YORK 24, N. Y.

(In reference to the much-debated question of whether a person will, or will not commit a "crime", under hypnosis, and whether a person's "moral sense" will or will not deter him from following hypnotic suggestion toward "crime", it seems to me that there are a couple of very important considerations which most arguments I've seen have overlooked.

1. What and when is a "crime"? The most sensible definition that I have heard is simply, "A crime is any action for which, upon conviction, the current law provides a penalty." To sell a bottle of whiskey in New York City, was not a crime in 1914; it was a crime in 1924; it was not a crime late in 1934. It was not a crime in Canada at any time during the period between 1914 and 1934, and is not today.

2. What is the person's "moral sense"? What is the person's "normal" behaviour? (As opposed to possible "abnormal behaviour" resulting from hypnosis) Despite the person's "religious convictions", what is his or her actual practice? If the subject, for example, is a hired assassin by profession, and is engaged in "committing crimes" upon occasion, what reason is there to assume that he or she would suddenly be restrained from such practice by any subconscious protection that supposedly protects one while under hypnosis? If the subject, let us say, is of the Roman Catholic faith, but one given to frequent violation of the rule against eating meat on Friday, under ordinary circumstances. Is there any reason to suppose that he or she would not do so while in the hypnotic state? (From the theological point of view, I believe this could be called a crime, inasmuch as the Church provides a penalty for this act.) Yet, such an act is definitely "against the subject's religious convictions".

Or, let us say that the subject is firm enough in his or her practice to resist any temptation toward meat-eating on Friday, and the hypnotist assures the patient that it is now Saturday, tells him or her that

he's very hungry, and offers the victim a juicy steak. Is there any reason to suppose that our subject's subconscious would rescue him? (And this, let me stress, is not a trivial matter to a devout Roman Catholic.)

In reference to "mesmerism" and "hypnotism", I'd like to hear a brief explanation of the basic differences, having gone along with the general supposition that the latter was merely a development of the former.)

FAN-VET CONVENTION

Dear Bob:

Milton Luros did an excellent job with your January 1953 cover. I rate this cover among the best you've yet presented. The best in my mind was the May 1951 cover by Leo Morey. I'd like to see more of Leo Morey both inside and on the cover. You have some excellent Orban interiors in this Jan '53 issue; why not try Orban on the covers? He has done some excellent work in this field. Of course, in my opinion there is none better than the "Dean of s-f artists", Frank R. Paul! Why not try to get him to do some work for you? I always enjoy a good percentage of your stories, and this issue was no exception. I didn't care for the article, though.

I would like to inform your readers that the Fantasy Veterans Association is holding their "Third Annual Fan-Vet Convention" at Werdermann's Hall, 3rd Avenue, at East 16th Street, New York City, N.Y. on April 19th, 1953. The affair starts at 1 PM. The doors to the hall will be open at 12 noon. You know the interesting affair we had last year. This year we plan to make it even better. As with last year's convention, we plan a super, super-auction, with loads and loads of original covers and interiors from most of the science-fiction magazines—including *Future*, *Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Dynamic Science Fiction*. For the pro mag collectors, we have quite a few rare items to auction off. The chances are they will be able to fill that hole in their collection at a very reasonable price. As you and your readers well know, all the profits from this auction will be used by the Fan-Vets to send magazines and other s-f needs to the boys and girls in the Armed Forces overseas. Though current s-f magazines are donated to the Fan-Vets by the fans and readers of s-f, the post-office doesn't donate postage—and donations of money are

never high enough to take care of this mighty big item. These annual conventions, and their auction, brings in enough money to keep the Fan-Vets supplied with postage-money for about a year. But as the needs for magazines overseas increases, so does the postage; so this year we are going all out to make this the best convention yet held and the auction the largest and most interesting. Remember there are no newsstands in Korea.

There is no fee of any kind at these conventions; you just sign the registration and walk in to an afternoon of talks by many of the professional authors, editors and artists, plus the s-f fans and readers. I hope to see all of you there.

—James V. Taurasi, 137-07 32d Avenue,
Flushing 34, New York

THOUGHT-PROVOCATION

Dear Sir:

I have just finished the January issue of *Future Science Fiction*. Even though it is only the second copy I have read (have been reading SF for years) my opinion of it is: Good science-fiction.

Most of the stories were well-written, but my attention was drawn primarily to the featured novelet "Testament of Andros" by James Blish. This story does not show a composition similar to the ordinary sf appearing in your magazine; it makes you think about what you have read. If it does not do this to you, then you are not getting the full meaning of the story.

The covers are, as you mentioned in "The Reckoning", a little too "fleshy". I am looking forward to your new covers, employing modern art-without the flesh.

In its entirety, I think you have a good magazine, and hope you keep up the good work in the future.

—Andrew Brandwein, 63-89 Saunders St.,
Rego Park 74, N.Y.

(The manner of composition of "Testament of Andros" was one of its most unusual features, although it wasn't the whole thing, of course. I do not foresee a trend to this style of writing, although I do feel that much could be done with the basic technique of varying presentation with the needs of a particular story. Obviously it could not have been written in the ordinary manner.)

OBJECTION

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

The quick raising in price of *Future* to a .25 category came both as a surprise and a mild shock, if not only with me at least, to many of my fellow science-fantasy enthusiasts and friends. In words of one syllable: *Future* is not worth twenty-five cents. At least, not with ninety-eight printed pages, of which about twenty-four are composed of advertisements and features....

I am not always inclined to dissect and vivisect a science-fiction magazine, but consider that yours have probably the poorest interiors and reproduction. With very little change, they are the very first issue of *Future*, published over two years ago. The quality of paper is among the roughest and poorest; a blotting paper manufacturer could make a fortune with it. Owing to limited space, the arrangement of your features, and most of your interior layout, is very crammed and run-together, which is again enhanced by the poor reproduction and highly-absorbent paper.

I still have not said anything about the character and quality of your articles and stories. Suffice to say, they are now on the same level as *Startling Stories*, etc., or about 5th to 6th place on the science-fiction field—which is saying a lot, considering that there are about eighteen or twenty other science-fiction magazines below that rank in the business. Yet, I would think that even if one were to print the "Number One" grade of stories, under such circumstances as your present format, a lot would be "lost in the translation". It's often true that the jewel-box may make the jewel seem more lustrous, or that a person can enjoy a classical play more in the soft and cushioned seat of a Broadway theatre, than seated upon the stool in a basement nickelodeon.

To Willis Freeman: anent the difference between holding to the romanized and Grecian characters in letters, de Camp has been known to use the latter form in his "ch" or "k" sounds where a Greek background was used in his stories, although this is wrong, since the romanized form is correct. The Greek language (both modern and ancient) and alphabet do not have the letter "c"; therefore "kappa", or the letter "k" is used at all

times instead. To retain the letter "k" in an English translation is a literary fallacy, for the translator might as well retain all Greek characters if he wishes to keep the entire group of letters and words in the "mood" of things. A translation of letters, especially from a *non-romaic* language and alphabet, must at all times be complete to be grammatically correct. I think this means that Wallace West was quite right in using the letter "c" instead of "k" in words having a Greek origin. Though de Camp is one of the better writers in the science-fantasy field today (although a de Camp-Pratt combination makes for a great and far better writer), considering his "The Glory That Was", in the April 1952 issue of *Startling Stories*, I would suggest that Mr. L&C could use a bit of boning up and study on the ethnic laws, anthropology, culture, and overall phases of both modern and ancient Greece. As an old student of Ellas and the Hellenes, and probably because I myself happen to be of Greek descent, I feel rather qualified to make, at least, this latter assertion.

—Calvin Thomas Beck, 84-18 Elmhurst Avenue, Elmhurst 73, LI, NY

(I'll let Sprague answer you on the Greek business; for the rest, see the following letter.)

NO OBJECTION

Dear Editor:

Having attained a position on the "soap box" it behooves me to say a few words in behalf of *Future*. First let it be said tho, that -I have come to regard you as the most intelligent and far-seeing of the present group of science fiction editors. A common fault of the majority seems to be the "Look at me, aren't I wonderful" attitude. The prize examples of this are regularly rendered by the esteemed H. L. Gold, and the worthy personage of Raymond A. Palmer—both of whom have no qualms about blowing their own horn. They loudly proclaim to all concerned that without any doubt *their* mag is the "leader" in the field. Whereas you calmly state that you realize *Future* is not the greatest but that you attempt to bring us stories that on occasion rank with the best. In this you have succeeded. For a lowly "pulp" magazine, *Future* is re-

markable in its consistent high quality of reading-material.

Let us look at the Jan issue: we have such widely-read and often-published authors as James Blish, John Wyndham, H. B. Fyfe, Damon Knight, Bryce Walton, and Richard Wilson. This line-up would do credit to *Astounding* or *Galaxy*; you certainly need offer no apologies for this issue. And to those who sneer at *Future* merely because it happens to be a pulp magazine, I wish to inform them of the following. . . . John W. Campbell has been disturbed over the lack of material from the "Big Names" available to him. So you see that for a "pulp" 'zine, you aren't doing badly at all.

On the subject of the readers column, some fans stated that "Down to Earth" was the worst of any stf mag. I can't agree with that; most of the letters (to me at least) are very interesting. However, a few of them are of such a length that it necessitates publishing fewer letters, thus making for little competition in the quest for originals.

Might I interject a short "plug" at this point? Here 'tis: The Missouri Science-Fantasy League is looking for members; won't all Missouri fans interested in joining please write either myself, or Larry Touzinsky, 2911 Minnesota Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, (end of "plug").

Award original pic's to (1) Dave Hammond, (2) Gunter Stave, (3) Charles Custer.

Now proving that I "practice what I preach" I will close this letter. May some of the 2-and-3-page contributors take the hint.

—Paul Mittelbuscher, Sweet Springs, Missouri.

(Well, Paul, far be it from yours truly to make any claims for modesty; those who accuse me of it just don't know me, see? The gimmick is that when you're sure of yourself you don't have to go around shouting at the top of your voice.

Seriously, I've no objection to anyone blowing his own horn, so long as he can produce a pleasing tone. But, being a lazy cuss, and sort of imaginative, I refrain—if I don't yap too much, maybe the readers will find *Future* pretty fair; but if I tell everybody it's terrific—then I'll be in trouble, should they think otherwise. Why borrow trouble when I have plenty as things stand?)

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Dear Bob:

Dr. Beck implies that he found my picture of Periclean Athens in "The Glory That Was", inaccurate, though without stating any particulars. I could reply that since this "Periclean Athens" was a synthetic one anyway, any discrepancies between it and the real thing would have to be blamed on the experts employed by the world-emperor to set the show up. However, as the story is eventually to be published in book form, I should very much like to have any specific errors called to my attention, so that I can correct them if I deem it expedient.

As for the spelling of Greek names: down to about fifty years ago, it was universal practice to use the Latinized forms, e. g. "Ancaeus", "Carduchi". Then people began using direct transliteration from the Greek, thus: "Ankaeos", "Kardouchoi". (If you wish to be really pedantic, you may write: "Agkaeos", "Kardoukhai".) This method has been gaining ground until, in the learned periodicals such as *Iris* and the *American Journal of Archaeology*, one finds about half the articles using one method, and half the other. As equally good scholarly arguments can be advanced for either method, I should say that it were a matter of personal preference.

After all, English-speaking people used to call a certain Russian emperor, "John the Terrible", where we now say, "Ivan the Terrible"—though Peter the Great has not yet become Pyotr.

L. Sprague de Camp

TESTIMONIAL FOR ANDROS

Dear Sir:

I don't believe my vocabulary is large enough to praise "Testament of Andros" the way I'd like to, and yet I'll try.

"Testament of Andros" was astounding, a work of art, a milestone in science-fiction writing.

May I compliment you upon your excellent taste in printing that manuscript? I had read *Future* before, but had not paid much attention to it. After reading "Testament of Andros", you may be assured that I'll never let your magazine

[Turn To Page 94]

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go unread again. I am in high hopes that I may again, some time in the near future, read a work half as good as this story.

I read it once, sat there, thought it over, and reread it. I could not be satisfied at leaving it like that. I read it again, and again, and again. Each time, something new came to mind. Each time, the story—or, should I say, six stories—took an entirely different meaning.

I've read it four times since that night. Each time, I felt something stirring in me. It made me feel that something like this had happened, was happening, and would happen. The last time I read it, it frightened me—and I don't frighten easily.

I wondered how Mr. Blish's mind worked, what went on inside him when he wrote "Testament of Andros". How did his imagination produce it?

I wonder if it might be possible for me to contact Mr. Blish. I would feel very grateful if you could give me his address.

I have read many books and stories, and I'll probably read many more. But never any as good, startling, different—I find I have no adjectives to describe it, but I feel that you will understand.

—Frances Faine, Box 1323, Avalon, Catalina Isle, California.

(We can't give you Mr. Blish's address, but we'll see to it that he sees your letter; and he can get in touch with you, if he's willing and able—the gentleman is very busy, these days.)

"Testament of Andros" received much praise, but—as the ratings will show—there were a number of readers who disliked it, as I expected some would.)

APPRECIATION

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Just a short line of appreciation for the improvements shown in your two magazines over the last part of 1952. As you know far better than I do, the professional sf field is now a very highly competitive one and it is good to see you accepting the challenge of the times. I'm not suggesting that you are yet up with the leaders; but at least you are giving us readable stories, which is more than can be said for some of your competitors.

I have very little preference concerning

DOWN TO EARTH

actual type of story, other than to say I like them as near to home as possible. By that I mean; if an incident can be made to conform with Mars in the 21st Century, then it appeals to me more than the same incident set on the eighth planet of Mira in the 31st Century. Similarly, an invasion of the Earth by the next band of wandering BEMs scares me a lot more than an invasion of the Solar System as a whole. After all, we are such a small place, it is possible we could be overlooked!

Covers? Well, I like them conservative; but you haven't got to sell them to me, so it doesn't matter much. Keep the scanty-clad females off, if possible. They cannot compare with the girls on the slicks, anyway.

The departments are good. I particularly like the articles of L. Sprague de Camp, a long-standing top-favorite of mine.

Guess that is your ration of ego-boo for this time so keep up the good work during 1953.

—W.D. Veney, "Yale Apartments",
Upper Edward Street, Brisbane Q'land,
Australia

(Well, it all depends upon whether those there BEM's have homo-sap-detector units with them. If they have, of course, being highly intelligent, they'll probably realize that Earth Always Wins, and give us a wide berth.)



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GET THEE BEHIND ME, CLIO

(continued from page 65)

be ripe for the pendulum to swing back to a full democracy again, judging by past experience. If you care to wait around, it should be interesting to see just what the answer to the present situation is. McKinley's theories don't help us there—they merely serve to show what can come of the weapons we have already.

There are few romantic pictures in the world of the future that a careful study of interpretive history shows us. Without some trick solution to the problem, there can be almost no honest science-fiction written that isn't pretty gloomy. Those planets won't be peacefully colonized; that thriving Solar Federation of Democratic Worlds looks pretty dim; and the struggle of the young scientist against the red tape of his government looks like a thing he'd never dare to risk



So, read your history books with care. By all means, take a look at the documentation for this picture to be found in "Democracy and Military Power". Then, if you want to escape from the picture of history as it probably will be, you might subscribe to all your science-fiction magazines, to see history as it might be if some of the ugly moods of that history were neglected.

Gentlemen, I solemnly promise you I'll have little to do with the Muse of History in future stories—and I'm sure the other writers will be as kind. Clio looks a little too much like her sister Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. It's a lot more fun fooling around with Urania.

Get thee behind me, Clio!



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A Report on Your
Votes and Comments

The race between the Blish and Wyndham novelets was hot from the very first, and the final returns show them equal in point-numbers; however, the fact that 50% of the voters placed Andros first, as against 20% for the Wyndham seems to overbalance the tie, and put what most of you agree was an outstandingly different story in first place.

Much praise, and a number of first-place votes, also came in for the Martello article. However, since so many of you have objected to the practice of listing articles along with stories on the rating-coupon, we're not asking you to do it any more. We want to know if you like articles, so are listing them in a separate category from here on out.

This time, it looks as if only a minority went for the Walton story — but this might be a stroke of luck for Bryce, after all. A number of tales that the voters turned thumbs down upon have been snapped up by anthologists. Fair enough as a consolation prize, I'm sure.

Here's how you rated our January offerings:

1. Testament of Andros (Blish)	3.05
2. Time Stops Today (Wyndham)	3.05
3. The Compleat Collector (Fyfe)	3.58
4. Hypnotism: Fact vs. Fiction (Martello)	3.76
5. In the Beginning (Knight)	4.23
6. Incident in Iopa (Wilson)	4.76
7. Minority Decision (Walton)	5.29

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★

Number these in order of your preference, to the left of numeral; if you thought any of them bad, mark an "X" beside your dislikes.

- 1. Ecological Onslaught (Vance)
- 2. Liberation Of Earth (Tenn)
- 3. Tenth-Level Enigma (Machado)
- 4. Judas Of The Spaceways (Kubilius)
- 5. The World Is Yours (Warner, Jr.)

★

Did you like the article? Yes No

Whose were the three best letters this time? 1

2 3

General comment

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